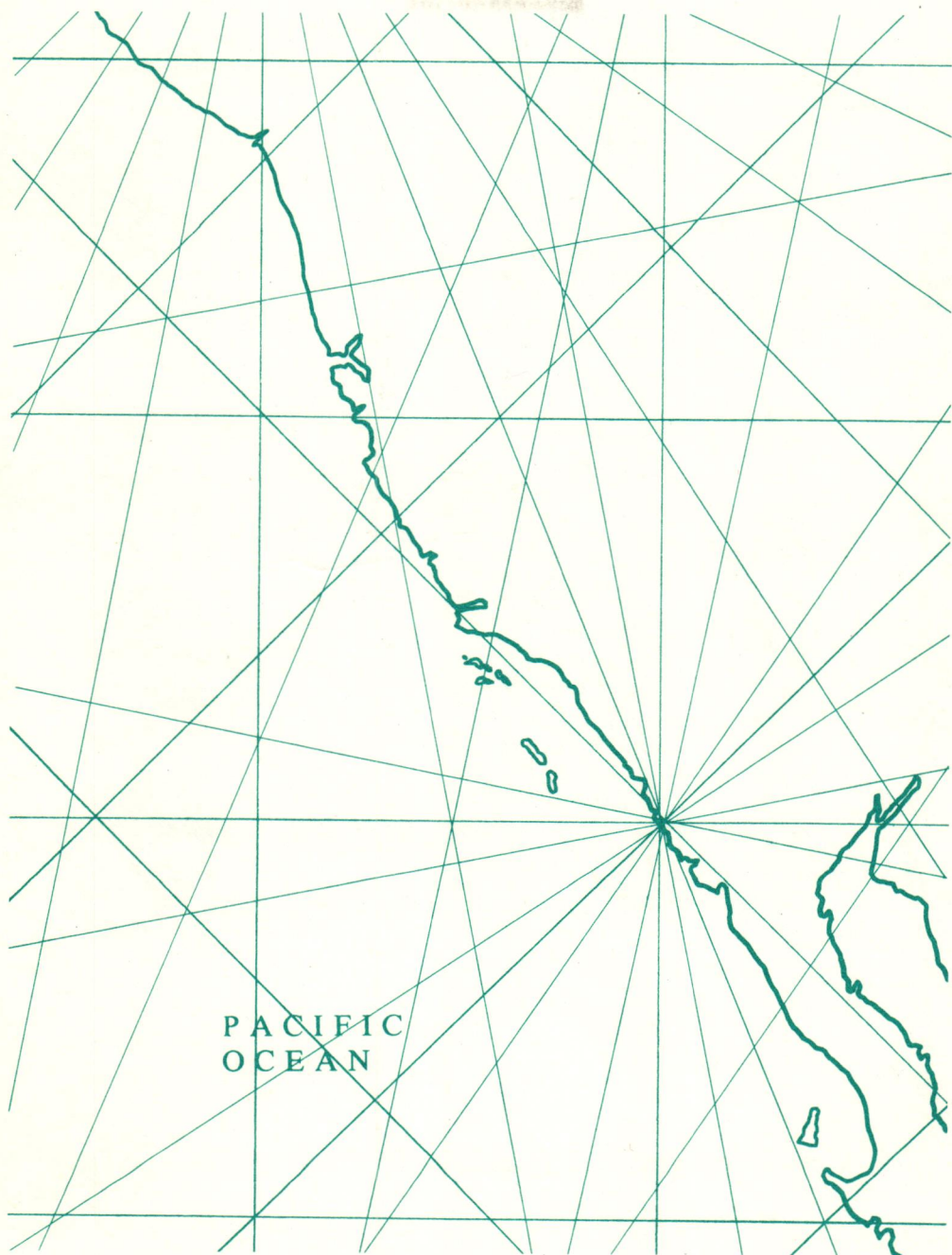


May 1993

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CALIFORNIA



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From the Editor: Living on the Edge

The book *Living with the California Coast* offers a blueprint for seacoast conservation based on the “dynamic nature of the coast and the physical processes that continue to shape it.” Authors Gary Griggs and Lauret Savoy draw a stark picture of the contradiction between the organic processes of coastal geology and the technological properties of the built environment. Their punch line: “history indicates that most structures [on the ocean’s edge] should be considered temporary.” With 80 percent of Californians concentrated within thirty miles of its coastline, the attitude of the state and its population toward coastal development is critical.

Together, Pilkey and Wallace, Burke, Stanton, and Grenell walk us across the contemporary terrain of coastal development. In 1972 the California voters expressed sufficient concern about the future of the water-

front to pass Proposition 20, the Coastal Zone Conservation Act, which stated that the California coast “is a distinct and valuable natural resource of vital and enduring interest to all people.” The broad impact of coastal regulation on property owners, planning agencies, and governmental institutions from the local to the national level (as well as on those professions whose charge it is to build) has led to a commonly held view that counterposes the Act’s dual objectives: *resource conservation* and *development for use*.

This has not always been the view of California’s seacoast inhabitants. Gebhard, Tillner and Flusty, and Smith each recount different aspects of the historical narrative of building along the coast: the ecological habitation of the water’s edge by American Indian peoples; the colonization of that edge for purposes of trade by the Europeans;



W. H. Fletcher, *One mile long!* The Southern Pacific Wharf at Santa Monica. California State Library.

the architectural enactments of the dream of residing at land's end; the role of 'the beach' as a shared public realm for a disparate population.

Takigawa and Sekula, through the medium of photography, document the coast as a site of work, reminding us that the picturesque images held dear in the popular imagination exclude significant commercial practices—fishing and lumbering industries, oil refining operations, shipbuilding, cargo exchange—all essential to maintaining the ocean as an *economic* resource.

Consideration of the achievable 'balance' between conservation and use thus forces us to inquire: *development of what uses for whom and conservation of what resources toward what ends?* As we labor to determine responsible state policy, let us note Griggs and Savoy's axiom, "always keep in mind that the Pacific Ocean is a very powerful force to oppose." In relation to 'shifting plate' theories of coastal dynamics, both of the state's seemingly contradictory goals miss a key point—no habitat, natural or artificial, is stable. The key issue surfaces: what can be the character of living on the edge that facilitates a dynamic natural and social coastal ecology?

Perhaps Smith's notion of the symbolic *stitch* (an artificial means of joining; a technique for healing wounds) can be reconceptualized as a *handshake* (a treaty between warring parties that holds for the moment). This relation would not have the pretense of being harmonic or 'natural'; rather it would articulate a temporal zone of peaceful coexistence between the driving forces of civilization and the ultimate power of nature. Then Sea Ranch could be seen not as a healing stitch, that is, an aesthetic symbol of the north coast "California Lifestyle," but as a momentary handshake for which *ecology* provided the sustaining principle—until the treaty was broken.



Edward S. Curtis, *On the Shores of the Pacific—Tolowa* from *The North American Indian*.

Herewith, the Editorial Board launches *etcetera*, the new supplement not bound by the chosen theme: an appendix of heterogeneous, distinctive *odds and ends. etcetera* then initiates a new feature "California Sketches" and, in memory of Allen Siple, FAIA, invites you to "whip out a sketch." "By sketching, I enhance my ability to see and feel the spaces—and this is what architecture is all about," wrote A. Quincy Jones, FAIA, in *The Sheer Joy of Sketching*. With the publication of Kurt Forster's essay, based on a lecture which concluded a series of talks and panel discussions he organized recently as Regents' Lecturer at UC, Riverside, *Architecture California* joins the exchange among architects, scholars, and campus planners regarding the future of the university campus. "Letters" engages the debate over the social practice of architecture in Los Angeles and continues the dialogue on the *time/place* relation in architecture.

Lian Hurst Mann, AIA

Don't Build on Fifth Street

Orrin H. Pilkey, Jr.
Wallace Kaufman

"Some things never change!" So said Orrin Pilkey in contributing to Architecture California this essay written with Wallace Kaufman in 1979 as part of the 'earth-shaking' book The Beaches Are Moving: The Drowning of America's Shoreline (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992). Pilkey and Kaufman establish the overarching geological context for development at the coastal edge.

No one living today remembers Sixth Street in the town of Encinitas north of San Diego, yet a subdivision map filed in 1882 shows it clearly. The developer expected Easterners to buy prime lots where they could build between the road and the edge of the cliffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Some residents now perched between Fourth Street and the cliffs say the map is fiction. A few longtime residents, however, remember a Fifth Street. In 1946 officials closed it. Today it has disappeared.

All along the California coast, but most spectacularly in the south, the ocean is reclaiming the land. Not claiming but *reclaiming*, because the materials of these cliffs were underwater once before. A higher sea level between glaciers tells only a minor part of the story. The other part is told by the cause of California's earthquakes. As one great plate of the earth's crust meets another, the southern California coast is bending upward. While sea level may gain on the cliffs between episodes of bending, over the past forty to fifty million years the coast has been rising. If the mind's eye could see history as a film unreeling

at the rate of several thousand years a second, we would see this hilly coast rising jerkily out of the ocean. For brief seconds the old ocean floor would lie exposed to the air. Then the sea would cut its way forward, creating a new cliff in the sloping terrain. In many places the coast falls in a series of terraces, each terrace an old seafloor. The coast which resulted from this hesitant emerging of seafloor is built by layers of hardened sediment, with here and there some lava from an ancient volcano.

Fifth and Sixth Streets in Encinitas did not disappear because the ground on which they sat was ancient, but because it was seafloor. Most of the coastal hills and cliffs of California are made of sandstone, shale, and siltstone. The durability of these rocks varies, but in most cases, at least near cliffs, developers should heed the biblical warning about houses built on sand. Under the assault of the ocean these sedimentary cliffs are more like loose sand than rock.

Streets were not the only thing to disappear in Encinitas. In 1938, some nine years before the disappearance of Fifth Street, the Self-Realization Fellowship built what was said to be the largest building on the southern California coast. The four-story-high temple on the bluffs overlooking the ocean cost \$40,000 to build in the midst of the Depression and was complemented by two large pools. Leakage from the pools lubricated the loosely layered rock beneath the foundations. Then in the winter of 1941 a heavy rain soaked the ground and large waves cut into the

base of the cliff. The proud temple and its towers bowed toward the ocean and pitched forward. These cliff collapses are so sudden and unpredictable that that same winter two children playing on the beach were crushed to death, and further south at Del Mar a freight train on the coastal route suddenly found itself in midair. Cliff erosion had undermined the tracks. Fortunately, three crew members were the only fatalities.

The train wreck, Fifth Street, and the Self-Realization Fellowship Building are hardly remembered. Even railroad officials do not remember or know of the old track, and geologists had a hard time in 1977 persuading them that erosion was about to dump another train. That year storms removed protective rubble from the base of the cliff, clearing the way for later storms to attack the cliffs themselves. Storms caused miles of cliff failures. When the trains were finally stopped, only seven feet separated the tracks from the cliff and the ocean, and ominous fissures were already opening in this thin margin.

Rubble at the base of a cliff, even if it does not contain bits of houses and railroads (as it often does), should tell any amateur geologist that danger lies above. As soon as one storm clears the rubble, the next could bring down the cliffs. In addition to this obvious clue, geologists note three conditions conducive to landslides: first, landslides often happen when a rainy season lubricates layers of rock; second, shale and other rocks which are bedded in smooth, thin, flat layers are most likely to slip; third, layers which dip toward the beach are most likely to give. The actual mechanism is a little more complicated. Under normal conditions, debris collects at the base of the cliff, shielding it from normal waves. Meanwhile the upper edge of the cliff retreats as drainage erodes it or small sections slump. Sooner or later the face of the cliff reaches an "angle of repose" which is more or less stable until storm waves remove the protective rubble with caves, cracks, and rock joints which collapse and accelerate cliff erosion. Ideal conditions of cliff collapse



David Schrader, *Pacific Edge*.

occur when a permeable layer of rock tilts toward the sea and lies on top of an impermeable layer. Water percolating down settles on the impermeable rock and greases the skids. This is the condition at Del Mar just north of San Diego.

Developers of a large cliff-top condominium (called "the Great Wall" by the vice-president of the town council) say fears of disaster are alarmist. Using recent measurements of erosion, they can show that the cliffs are retreating only a half inch per year. The town councilman says the Great Wall has not only walled citizens away from the beach but has walled the developers away from reality. He and geologists at the nearby Scripps Institution of Oceanography say this is a case of how to lie with statistics. They point out that average rates of cliff retreat are meaningless, since the cliffs slump suddenly, in large blocks, and more in one place than another. Developers can support their claim of a half inch a year by taking a large section of coastline and averaging the cliff retreat over the past ten or twenty years when the coast has been free of major storms and big waves. But each locale has its own history and

geology. Gerry Kuhn, a La Jolla geologist, used old tax maps and railroad and land surveys to show up to eight hundred feet of shoreline retreat in Encinitas. Half of this loss followed severe storms and floods between 1883 and 1889. Stories of cliff retreat are reflected in the regular disappearance of certain maps from the official file. Kuhn says the shoreline retreat also shows up in tax assessments. As a lot begins to fall in, its value goes down. When it is no longer a viable cliff-edge lot, the records show a dramatic rise in assessment for the lot behind it. A study done by the Southern California Testing Laboratory for the Del Mar Beach Club development in 1976, Solano Beach, concluded that within no more than three to five years cliff failure, unless stopped, would destroy the clubhouse and a residence.

Even the National Museum Fisheries Building, built in 1963 on the Scripps Institute campus, is disastrously located. The "Tuna Hilton" rests partially on a piece of bluff known as a slump block. Designers say the building is articulated so that it should stay intact as the bluff falls from underneath it.



Laguna Beach Central Bluffs.

Scientist George Moore, writing in the 1973 guidebook of the San Diego Association of Geologists, says: "Inasmuch as my own office is near the east [landward] corner of the building on the ground floor, I am especially interested in the correctness of this conclusion."

Development itself has helped turn the cliffs into sand. To enhance the ocean view, builders usually remove the small dune lines or ridges from the edge and down the face of the rock. Pipes from storm drains within the development emerge on the rock face and empty with the force of small waterfalls. Even lawn watering increases the danger as water seeps into the permeable rock layers.

Nature will be indifferent, as usual, to human problems. The erosion of cliffs and headlands all along the California coast not only feeds new material to the beaches, but leaves small islands of boulders a short distance offshore. These islands become important resting places for birds and seals.

If California's collapsing bluffs, like those of Cape Cod, could be the main source for sandy beaches, erosion would be a blessing in disguise. The famous

strands of Muscle Beach, Mission Beach, Santa Monica, and Malibu, however, all owe their existence in large part to rivers. Under natural conditions the river basins in the lower 240 miles of California receive some twelve million cubic yards of sediment each year. This load would seem to guarantee endless youth for the beaches. The system is not so simple.

Because the submerged continental shelf is so near the leading edge of the continental plate, it is narrow and sand disappears quickly over its edge into the oceanic abyss. As if this is not problem enough, the southern California shelf is creased by six spectacular submarine canyons, long narrow gorges whose dark fingers reach shoreward and pull sand and silt to depths from which they will never be recovered. Every year the Scripps Submarine Canyon near San Diego swallows up to 200,000 cubic yards of sand, enough to make a beach 150 feet wide, 18 inches deep, and over 4 miles long.

In 1975, Scripps Institution and Cal Tech began a comprehensive study of beach supplies in southern California. The study reaches back in time to 1925



when Hollywood was in its infancy, when the aerospace industry was little more than science fiction, and when refrigerated trucks and trains were not streaking eastward with California fruits and vegetables.

An exploding population has invaded the coastal hills and flood-prone coastal lowlands. People have outstripped the water supply, and their highways, houses, and offices clamor for building material—often sand and gravel. Today the region's construction industry annually mines over twenty-three million tons of sand and gravel from beaches, riverbeds, and dunes. The case of the Santa Clara River north of Los Angeles is a dramatic illustration of how much beach material is locked up by watershed "management" and "development." Between 1928 and 1955, human structures reduced the deliveries to the ocean by only 6 percent. Since then, three more dams have been built, each taking its toll until the river's delivery capacity has been cut some 37 percent, which includes an annual loss of sand alone amounting to seventeen million tons. The Santa Clara's "clarification" means that in the past twenty years the region has lost enough sand to create a beach 50 miles long, 110 yards wide, and a yard deep.

The Santa Clara's tale is repeated on each of the nine major rivers in the region. The Ventura River has lost 66 percent of its sediment. Throughout the area beach material is manipulated, locked up, and consumed by 311 water supply lakes and flood-control reservoirs, 77 sand and gravel mines, and 65 percolation basins. With the narrow continental shelf and the submarine canyons creating a constant demand for renewal of beach sand from inland sources, the effect of urban and agricultural growth has been disastrous and perhaps irreversible.

With natural supplies of sand cut off, many towns have turned to the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers, asking them to find new sand for starved beaches. Since World War II the Corps has obliged with more millions of dollars worth of sand-pumping operations. During the last five or ten years artificial beach nourishment has moved over two million yards of sand a year, almost as much as the natural system once did at considerably lower cost.

California's insistence on building cities and cultivating arid lands has been mirrored in Arizona, and together the most bitter fruits of this unplanned growth have been borne, not in this country, but in Mexico, where the Colorado River enters the Gulf of California. Once the beaches of the upper Gulf were supplied with 180 million tons of sediment a year by the river. California's and Arizona's thirst and greed for hydroelectric power have utterly changed this. In 1935 the United States built the Hoover Dam. Then came Glen Canyon, Parker, Imperial, and Laguna Dams. On the tributaries were built Flamingo Gorge, Navajo, and Curicants Dams. Today the Colorado River delivers almost no sediment to the Gulf. Irrigation water is returned diminished, salty, and loaded with pesticides. Here, as on Egypt's Nile delta, starved by the Aswan Dam, the lack of arriving sand has allowed the waves to eat into the beaches. The tides run faster and heavier in and out of the once fertile estuary at the river's mouth, and the shoreline has eroded back as much as five miles. Commercial and sports fishing boats find that without nutrients fish populations have declined. In 1969 the shrimping industry folded its nets and disappeared.

The disappearing beaches of southern California, like its fashions and movie trends, may be the image of the future. North to San Francisco and beyond, all the way to Cape Mendocino in the redwood country, the beaches rely on inland erosion for nourishment.

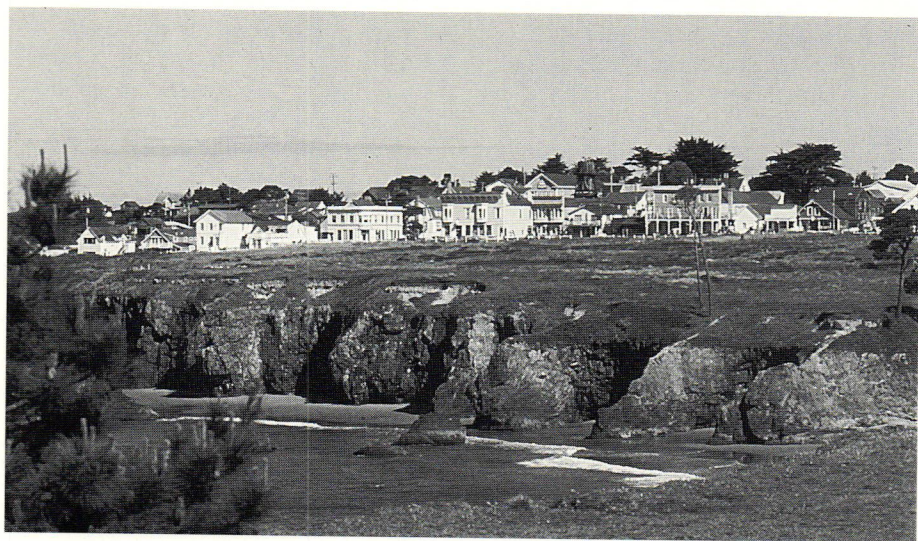
Rivers are the major source of material. Yet growing cities increasingly clamor for dams and reservoirs. This section of California coast is an almost continuous wall of spectacular cliffs and bluffs.

This is essentially a coast of coves and creeks and cliffs. This is especially true north of San Francisco. A driver on the coastal highway begins to notice that every few miles, with almost mathematical regularity, the road veers inland to descend the sides of a sharp canyon, cross a creek or small river, and ascend to the sea cliffs again. The bluffs bordering the canyon offer aerial views of a typical beach pattern. The ocean, as it receives new sand delivered by the waterways, pushes it into ridges. Waves, generally from the southwest, shape the ridges into north-reaching spits which would completely close the canyon mouths except for the narrowest exits cut by the fresh water. Wave energy is so high and sand supply from this region of dry summers so small that these spits and bars are often the only sandy beaches for many miles.

While the ocean seems to be trying to block the creeks and rivers with their own sand, the little spits provide effec-

tive protection from the harsh sea. Behind them lie the region's few coastal marches and excellent little campgrounds full of driftwood. The complete camper might have a surfboard for riding the ocean waves in front of the spit, and some diving gear for gathering the tasty abalone for the evening meal.

From San Francisco to Eureka, over two hundred miles, the coves are so small that the coast offers only one or two ports, small villages sending out timber from the mountains and harboring the growing fleets of pleasure craft owned by the folks on top of the cliffs. On this high coast, as nowhere else in the country, mankind's grasping after magnificent views is evident and dangerous. Houses crowd the sharp edges, their picture windows looking down at the power of the breaking waves and west across the Pacific to the unbroken horizon. So great is the demand for the cliff view that just south of Point Arena twelve solid miles of coast between highway and ocean is now developed as the exclusive Sea Ranch subdivision. The former sheep ranch is a potential new town of twenty thousand people. Many of the houses on this coast could



Mendocino Coast.



The Redwood Highway. California State Library.

well become driftwood before the mortgages are canceled. And since the cliffs the houses rest on also lie on or near the San Andreas Fault, cliff erosion could become an academic question any day.

At Cape Mendocino the coast changes rapidly. So does the weather that helps shape the landscape. The long, dry summers give way to the wetter weather typical of the Northwest. The rivers flow amply all year, and when they have not been dammed up, they bring sediment to the coast. On the coast itself the southwesterly winter winds combine with the highest surf in the country to drive sand northward. Milder summer winds from the north return only a portion of the sand. The result is a coast with many north-reaching sand spits and long, straight beaches often backed by dunes where there is space between mountains and sea. Like their smaller images to the south, these sand spits form perpendicular to the mouths of the rivers. Behind them lie quiet bays and harbors.

Although the rivers in this rainy and mountainous area discharge great quantities of water, there are no pro-

truding deltas like those of the Gulf Coast. First, there is much less sediment contributed by the smaller mountainous drainage area than by the flatter, soil-laden Great Plains and by the Piedmont of the East. Second, the intense energy of the Pacific's waves quickly disperses concentrations of sediment.

More sand, more water, and stronger waves have created spits, bigger harbors, and broader lagoons and marshes. Eureka, Crescent City, Coos Bay, Newport, and Astoria are all well-used seaports. A significant part of their beaches are the remnants of their principal export—lumber. Stumps, crotches, roots, and limbs, stripped of bark and bleached by salt and sun, lie in a fifty-foot-wide rift along the foot of the southern highway approach to Crescent City. On a warm day the debris tints the air with the sweetness of cedar and redwood. Perhaps there is poetic irony in the remnants of the great trees protecting the roads along which the logs from yet other great trees are trucked into the sawmills, shipping docks, and freight platforms.

The Coastal Act: An Overview

Michael J. Burke, Esq.

The California Coastal Commission whose charge is balancing land uses on the California coast—1,100 miles of some of the most valuable real estate in the world—has both the daunting responsibility to monitor a myriad of conflicting uses and the ability to wield enormous, sometimes seemingly arbitrary, power. The enabling legislation for the Coastal Commission has been one of the most studied and emulated land-use ordinances in America. For these reasons, Architecture California asked Michael Burke, a San Francisco attorney practicing real estate, land use, and environmental law with over a decade of experience with the Coastal Act, to tell its history, to outline the procedures under which it operates, and to pass on advice regarding how best to attain approval for coastal projects.

BACKGROUND

In November of 1972, California's voters forced comprehensive coastal planning and resource protection on a reluctant state legislature by approving Proposition 20, the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act of 1972. Proposition 20 was essentially a rewrite of Assembly Bill 200 which had been passed by the Assembly but rejected by a key Senate committee in May of 1972. The rejection of AB 200 marked the unsuccessful culmination of a six-year effort by environmentalists to move coastal legislation through the legislature. The proponents of coastal legislation then turned to the electorate. Al-

though a nigh impossible feat given the late May start, they were able to gather the 325,000 signatures required to place Proposition 20 on the November 1972 statewide ballot where it received 55.1 percent of the vote.

Proposition 20 created a California Coastal Zone Conservation Commission (CZCC) and directed the CZCC to prepare and submit to the legislature by December 1, 1975 a long-range comprehensive plan for the conservation and development of the coast. Proposition 20 also required the CZCC and six regional commissions to administer a permit process to control coastal development in the interim. By its own terms, Proposition 20 would expire January 1, 1977. However, chastened by the success of the coastal initiative, shuffled by reapportionment, and facilitated by a shift in executive and legislative power from the Republicans to the Democrats, the legislature enacted permanent coastal legislation in 1976.

Like Proposition 20, the 1976 Coastal Act created a state Coastal Commission and six regional commissions. The regional commissions were abolished in 1981. However, the Commission still maintains regional offices in San Diego, Long Beach, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and San Francisco, the Commission's state headquarters.

Although the Act, in theory, contemplates the transfer of primary responsibility for comprehensive planning and permit control to each coastal city and county, this has not happened for two reasons: first, the transfer occurs only after a local government has prepared, and the Commission has re-

viewed and certified, a local coastal program (LCP); second, the Commission retains substantial appellate authority to review the land use decisions of a local government even after it has certified the local government's LCP.

An LCP consists of a land use plan (LUP) and the zoning ordinances, zoning district maps, and other measures adopted by a local government to implement its LUP. An LUP is akin to a specific plan for a local government's coastal zone. It includes a map sufficiently detailed to indicate the kinds, locations, and intensities of land uses that will be permitted within a local government's coastal zone, together with a statement of the resource protection and development policies that will apply within the coastal zone. Before it may certify an LCP, the Commission must find that the LCP contains a specific component to *assure maximum public access to the coast and to public recreation areas within the local government's coastal zone*. The Commission also must find that the LCP meets the requirements of, and at the local level will implement, the coastal resources planning and management policies of the Act. The thrust of these policies is to *preserve and protect scenic, marine, aquatic and riparian resources, environmentally sensitive habitat areas, agricultural lands and timberlands*. The Act's policies tend to prohibit or restrict development, although less so for coastal-dependent and visitor-serving development. Permitted development must be concentrated within, or located in close proximity to, existing developed areas. As of February 1993, 79 of 126 local coastal planning areas, or about 63 percent, have certified LCPs. These fully certified LCPs cover about 70 percent of the total land area included within the statewide coastal zone. The Commission also has certified the LUPs, but not the implementing ordinances, for another 35 local coastal planning areas.¹



Santa Monica Beach. California State Library.

Even after the Commission has certified a local government's LCP, the Commission retains appellate jurisdiction over: (1) any development between the sea and the first public road paralleling the sea, or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or the mean high tide line, whichever is greater; (2) any development located on tide lands, submerged lands, public trust lands, or within 100 feet of any wetland, estuary, or stream, or within 300 feet of any coastal bluff; (3) any development located in a sensitive coastal resource area; and (4) any development that is not designated as the principal permitted use under the local government's zoning ordinance.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

A coastal development permit (CDP) is required for virtually any development within the coastal zone, which runs the 1,100 mile length of California, from Oregon to Mexico, and extends seaward to the state's outer limit of jurisdiction (including all off-shore islands) and inland generally 1,000 yards from the mean high tide line (in highly developed urban areas such as San Francisco, the coastal zone may extend only a few hundred feet inland; in rural areas such as the San Mateo County coastside, it may extend inland up to five miles).²



Monterey Coast Highway. Photo, Jerry Takigawa.

The Act defines "development" broadly to include, on land, in or under water: (1) placement or erection of any solid material or structure; (2) discharge or disposal of any dredged material or gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; (3) grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; (4) change in the density or intensity of use of land including subdivision pursuant to the Subdivision Map Act and any other division of land; (5) change in the intensity of use of water, or of access to water; (6) construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure; and (7) the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations.

The judiciary has also been willing to construe "development" as broadly as the Act would appear to allow. For example, the courts have held that "development" includes: (1) remodeling a commercial building to include a second floor restaurant because the resulting increases in automobile and pedestrian traffic would increase the intensity of the building's use; (2) converting an apartment house to a stock cooperative because it would divide the ownership interest in land (even though, at the time in question, it would not have constituted a subdivision under the Map Act); (3) installing an 18,000 gallon propane tank because the Act does

not exclude movable structures or personal property; and (4) extracting sand from the surf zone because it would come within the literal definition of "development" under the Act.

The penalties for failure to comply with the permit requirements of the Act could be harsh. The Commission may issue a cease and desist order which could require removal of the development and restoration of the site. A person who violates the permit requirements of the Act is also subject to civil fines. However, all but the most egregious scofflaws may take some comfort from the fact that the Commission's enforcement resources are scarce.

If a local government does not have a certified LCP, a developer must apply to the Commission for a CDP. Before it may issue a CDP, the Commission must find both: (1) that the proposed project itself would conform to the coastal resources planning and management policies of the Act; and (2) that approval of the proposed project would not prejudice the ability of the local government to prepare an LCP that conforms to the policies of the Act and would be acceptable to the Commission and its staff. The latter criterion has often constituted a frustrating obstacle to project approval pending preparation and certification of an LCP.³

If a local government has a certified LCP, a developer must apply to the local government for a CDP. A local government, on hearing an original application, or the Commission, on hearing an appeal from a local government's action, must issue a CDP if the proposed project conforms to the LCP. However, as much as (or more so than) other land use regulations, an LCP's goals, policies, and implementing ordinances are open to differing interpretations and to different applications of the same set of facts by different people. This is because *there are conflicts inherent in the Act which are*

usually reflected in an LCP. For example:

- In adopting the Act, the legislature declared that the coastal zone is a delicately balanced ecosystem and that the permanent protection of its scenic and natural resources is a paramount concern. However, the legislature also declared that development consistent with the Act's policies is essential to the economic and social well-being of Californians, especially people employed within the coastal zone.

- One of the basic goals of the Act is to protect, maintain, and, where feasible, enhance and restore the environmental quality of the coastal zone and its natural resources. However, another basic goal is to assure orderly, balanced utilization and conservation of coastal zone resources taking into account the social and economic needs of the people of the state.

- The Act includes policies which mandate the protection of natural resources, including views to and along the coast. However, the Act also en-

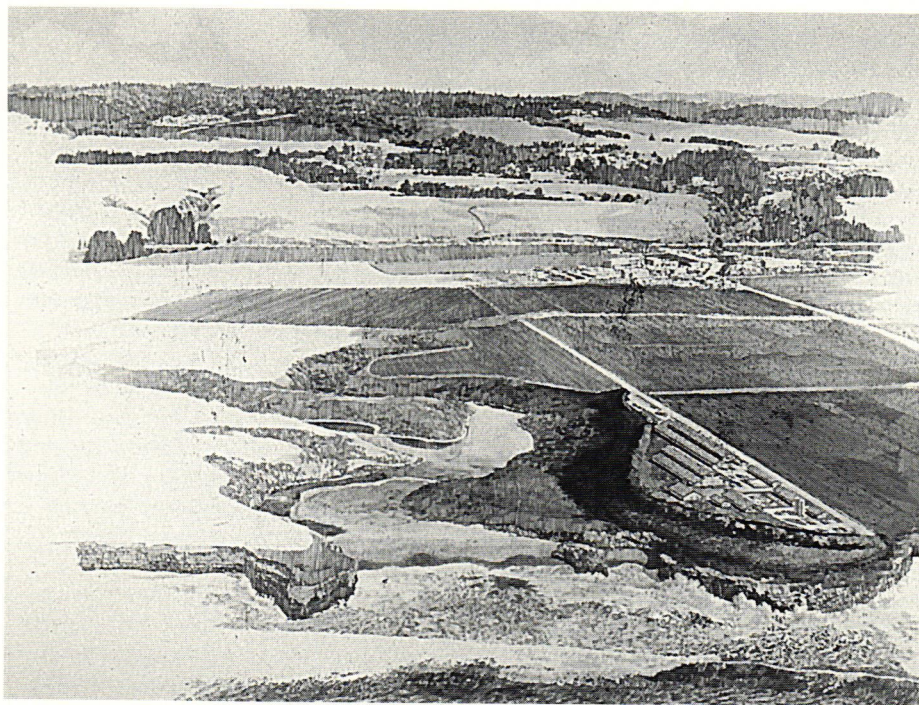
courages the location of certain types of development adjacent to the ocean, such as coastal dependent industries, or lodging, food, and recreation facilities (so that Californians from throughout the state may come and enjoy the coast), even though these facilities will impair views of natural coastal beauty and may harm other coastal resources.

The legislature recognized that conflicts such as these might occur between or among two or more of the Act's goals and policies and provided that these *conflicts should be resolved in a manner which, on balance, is the most protective of significant coastal resources.* In this context, the legislature declared that "broader policies which, for example, serve to concentrate development in close proximity to urban and employment centers may be more protective, overall, than specific wildlife habitat and other similar resource policies."

In reviewing a case, the Commission may weigh and balance the evidence and interpret the LCP policies



The Inn at Spanish Bay, Pebble Beach. Bull Stockwell & Allen. Photo, Jane Lidz.



Institute of Marine Sciences, University of California, Santa Cruz. Esherick Homsey Dodge and Davis.

differently than the local government. This is because the appeal of a local government's CDP decision is fundamentally different from the appeal of almost any other land use decision a local government might make. Most local land use decisions are appealed directly to the courts. However, CDP decisions are appealed to the Commission. On appeal, a court may not hold a new hearing and make an independent decision on the project at issue. A court must uphold a local government's interpretation and application of its general plan, zoning ordinance, or subdivision code if there is substantial evidence in the record of the local proceedings to support it. Evidence is "substantial" when a reasonable person might accept it as adequate to support a conclusion, without regard to contrary evidence. A reviewing court is not at liberty to overturn a local government's land use decision simply because a contrary decision would have been equally or even more

reasonable. However, the Commission hears appeals from local governmental CDP decisions *de novo*. That is to say, the Commission holds a new public hearing on the project and makes its own independent decision whether to issue the CDP on the basis of the evidence presented during that hearing. Under these circumstances, it is conceivable that a local government and the Commission could render contrary decisions on exactly the same evidence. In such a case, though, the local government would not benefit from the substantial evidence rule although, ironically, the Commission might. Should the Commission reverse the CDP decision of a local government after a *de novo* hearing, and should the local government or the developer appeal, a court would be required to uphold the Commission's interpretation and application of the local government's LCP if it were supported by substantial evidence. This would be true even if the court were to

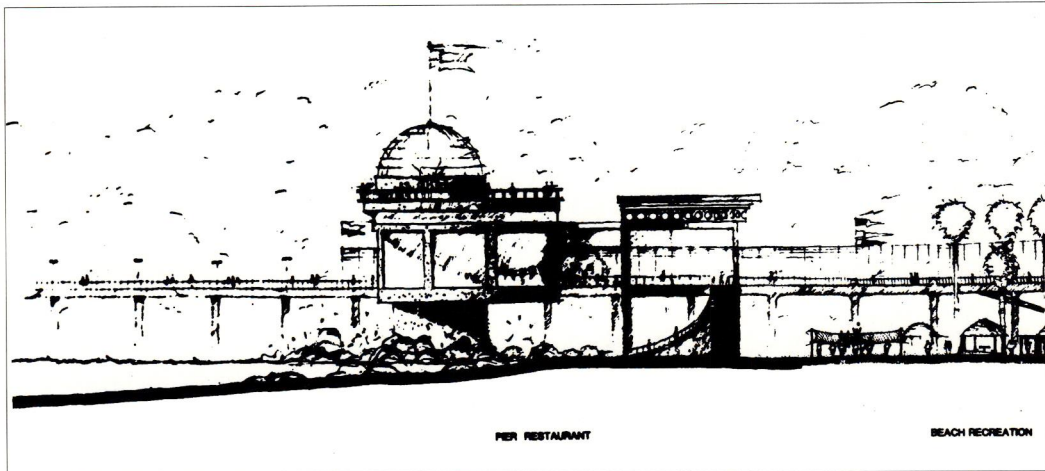
conclude that, on balance, the weight of the evidence favored the action originally taken by the local government. The substantial evidence rule underscores the importance of success at the Commission level. It is very difficult to overturn an adverse Commission decision on appeal. For this reason, the Act constitutes a real (and rare) state intrusion into local planning.

The Commission likes to claim that it has approved 95 percent of the projects that have come before it. However, this statistic should be put into perspective. First, it embraces all projects, including minor "consent calendar" matters. Second, a local government or the Commission on initial application, or the Commission on appeal, may impose terms and conditions on a CDP to ensure that an approved project will conform to the provisions of the Act. The conditions imposed by the Commission may radically alter a project, or even render it infeasible. In any event, according to the Commission, more projects are being approved subject to fewer conditions now than in the past. This is attributed to a steady rise in coastal design standards over the last twenty years as a consequence of the Commission's implementation of the Act.

PROCESS

The Commission has twelve voting members, six representatives of the public chosen from the state at large, and six local elected officials chosen from coastal counties stretching from Del Norte to San Diego.⁴ The Governor, the Senate Committee on Rules, and the Speaker of the Assembly each appoint two public representatives and two elected officials. Terms are two years, but members may be removed by the appointing authority at any time. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that politics are rumored to have played a part in Commission decisions from time to time during the past twenty years.

The Coastal Commission process can be a difficult one for a local developer. Given the vast geographic scope of the Commission's jurisdiction and the high volume of matters it must address on a regular basis, it is difficult, if not impossible, for an individual Commission member to become generally familiar with the plans, problems, needs, and hopes of each coastal city and county, let alone intimately familiar with the myriad issues likely to surround a specific development proposal. This is



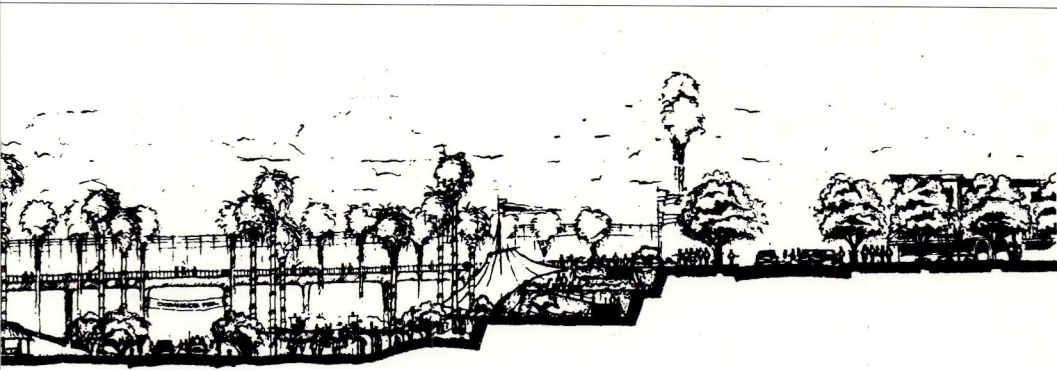
Strand waterfront, Oceanside. Martinez/Wong & Associates, Inc.

unfortunate, since development within the coastal zone, by its very nature, often involves difficult and complex planning, environmental, and legal issues. For these reasons, the Commission must, *and generally does*, rely heavily on the reports and recommendations of its staff.

A local developer's opportunities to educate the Commission are limited. At a hearing, the total time allotted for oral argument to all project proponents combined is only ten or fifteen minutes, including rebuttal. Prior to a hearing, a developer may (and should) submit written and graphic evidence to the Commission, and after a hearing may submit additional evidence should the Commission postpone its vote. However, this information must compete for attention with the deluge of materials about LCPs, federal consistency determinations, conservancy matters, administrative items, and other projects which incessantly descend on the Commission from staff, local governments, interested parties, and the public. The Commission's review and approval process, like any other land use process, would benefit from informal, pre-hearing discussions between the decision makers and the parties on either side of a proposed

action. However, the Commission process has never been conducive to this practice, perhaps because of the size of the Commission, the dispersal of its members throughout the state, and the sheer volume of matters they must consider; and it became even less so on January 1, 1993, the effective date of new legislation that strictly regulates *ex parte* communications.

These obstacles to communication could constitute significant barriers to project approval, especially if a local developer must overcome a negative staff report. Since the Commission is likely to rely heavily on the staff report when it reviews and acts on a development proposal, a balanced report which lays out the evidence and argument on both sides of each disputed issue would be desirable, not only for the developer, but also for the Commission. Unfortunately, the Commission's administrative regulations militate against this. These regulations direct the staff to prepare a report that includes a recommendation for approval or denial of a project, together with a written statement of facts, legal conclusions, and findings that support the recommendation. There is no requirement that the staff report include, and in practice the staff



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SPORTS PARK AREA

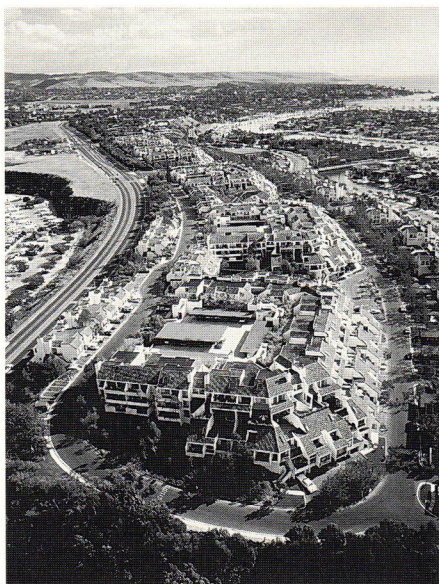
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report will not include, an alternative statement of facts and set of findings that could support a possible contrary decision. As a consequence, there is likely to be little fact or law in a staff report to help a developer or potentially sympathetic commissioners overcome a negative staff recommendation.

Since a favorable staff report is important, a local developer should try to involve the Commission staff as early as possible in the CDP process, whether the Commission will issue the CDP in the first instance or only consider the project in the event of an appeal. However, early substantive staff involvement is not likely. The Commission's administrative regulations prohibit the filing of a CDP application until the local government and all other agencies with jurisdiction over the proposed project have granted at least preliminary approvals. These would include any necessary general plan amendment, rezoning, conditional use authorization, tentative subdivision map approval, and sewer or water commitment. Although the Commission's regulations do not preclude informal discussions with staff prior to the acceptance of an application, personnel and budgetary constraints make informal pre-application discussions unlikely. The best time to approach the Commission staff may be while staff is reviewing and preparing comments on the draft environmental impact report, provided, of course, that the local government is required to prepare one for the project. Despite best efforts, however, a developer may have to wait to read the staff report to discover whether the staff will recommend approval or denial of the project and, if the recommendation is for approval, what changes and conditions the staff will recommend. Generally, the earliest a developer will see the staff report is ten days before the hearing, and often a developer will have even less time to review and respond to the report.



Promontory Point, Newport Beach. Fisher-Friedman Associates. Photo, Steve Proehl.

Because both the opportunities to educate the Commission and the time to respond to the staff report will be limited, a local developer should try to determine the aspects of the project that might trouble the staff or the Commission and, from the beginning, plan the project to avoid them. Obviously, a project should be designed to avoid adverse impacts on significant coastal views; to complement rather than compete with its natural or man-made setting; to avoid riparian corridors, wetlands, habitat for endangered or threatened species, or other environmentally sensitive areas; and to provide buffers between these areas and new development.

The concerns of the staff and the Commission are likely to extend well beyond design. *The Act expressly makes access a major issue.* The scope of this issue will vary depending on the type of project. For a single-family residence or small subdivision the access issue might be limited to a pedestrian trail to or along the coast, while for a larger subdivision or commercial project it could



Cove Colony Residence. Goldman Firth Boccato Architects. Photo, Y. Futagawa.

expand to embrace vehicular access, public parking, public vista points, and public restrooms. In one locale, the issue might be public parking for beachcombers, while in another locale the issue might be public parking for commercial or recreational fishermen. Or staff and the Commission might be concerned that project generated traffic could reduce the capacity of local roads to carry visitors to and from nearby beaches. Depending on locale, another hot issue might be the possible adverse impact of new development on agricultural production, or even the potential for agricultural production on currently fallow land. The Commission has been reluctant to permit the introduction of uses that might be incompatible with agricultural production even if the new uses are subject to deed restrictions which waive nuisance claims based on noise, odors, dust, and aerial spraying. These are but a few examples of the potential issues that a particular development or



Seacliff stair, Malibu. Kanner Architects.

locale might present, and that a local developer should try to plan around.

In trying to determine the aspects of a project which might cause concern, common sense is a good place to start. A local developer should also review the Commission's interpretive guidelines, prior Commission decisions regarding similar projects that might serve as precedents, and the reports and recommendations prepared by the Commission staff for these projects. A local developer should also learn as much as possible about the land use and environmental philosophies of the Commission members who will determine the fate of the project. A review of prior Commission votes is an obvious place to start. Those Commission members who are also local elected officials are likely to have acted on land use projects in their own communities. Their local voting records could be studied, too. And if it can be arranged, there is no substitute for meeting with the Commission staff.

As the hearing approaches, a local developer should prepare to review the staff report immediately upon receipt and to respond to it as soon as possible thereafter. Every effort should be made to confer with the staff prior to the hearing to clarify facts, resolve problems, and compromise disputes over recommended conditions of approval in the report. The Commission should focus only on significant issues. Often the developer must decide which issues are likely to make or break the project and ignore the rest. A developer should do all he can to make it easy for the staff and the Commission to understand and appreciate his or her position on disputed issues. For example, if a developer desires to modify the recommended conditions of approval, they should start with the staff recommendations, propose specific language for the desired changes, and present the staff and the Commission with a 'marked' draft which clearly shows the differ-

ences between the developer's proposals and the staff's recommendations. Of course, the fewer changes, the better.

In closing, this author would advise any local developer who anticipates that their project will or may be reviewed by the Commission as the consequence of a CDP application or appeal to learn as much about the process as early in the process as possible from architects, planners, lawyers, and other developers who have been through it and survived. Ideally, this education would begin well before project design.

NOTES

1. This information was provided by the Commission's Public Information Office during a telephone conversation on February 2, 1993. Although there are only about 70 cities and counties subject to the Act, there are 126 "LCP segments" because many of these local governments have elected to divide their coastal zones into two or more planning areas for LCP purposes.

2. The Commission is required to file with the clerk of each coastal county a map in sufficient detail to indicate whether a particular property is located within the coastal zone.

3. The Act offers a local government two opportunities to exercise limited CDP authority prior to certification of its LCP:

Prior to certification of its LUP, a local government may elect to exercise permit authority provided it adopts certain permit procedures required by the Act. In determining whether to issue a CDP under this alternative, the local government would be required to make the same findings as the Commission were the Commission to issue the CDP in the first instance; and the Commission would be required to apply the same standards to the project should the local government's CDP be appealed. A local government's issuance of the CDP under this alternative may be appealed not only by an aggrieved member of the public, but also by the Commission's Executive Director or any two members of the Commission. Notwithstanding the issuance of a CDP by a local government which has made this election, and without the necessity of an appeal, a developer would still be required to obtain an additional CDP from the Commission for a project located between the sea and the first public road, or within 300 feet of the inland extent of any beach or the mean high tide line, whichever

is greater; or on tidelands, submerged lands, or public trust lands; or within 100 feet of any wetland, estuary, or stream; or within 300 feet of any coastal bluff.

After Commission certification of a local government's LUP, but before Commission approval of its implementing ordinances, the Act delegates CDP authority over certain projects to the local government, again provided the local government adopts certain permit procedures required by the Act. These procedures must prohibit the issuance of a CDP for any project which might conflict with the ordinances the local government is preparing to implement its certified LUP. However, the Act excludes from this delegation of CDP authority any of the projects described in the preceding paragraph. A developer would still be required to obtain a CDP permit from the Commission for any of these projects. The standard for projects covered by the delegation described in this paragraph is different than the standard for projects covered by the delegation described in the preceding paragraph. The local government, or the Commission on appeal, must issue the CDP if it finds that the proposed project conforms to the certified LUP. Again, a CDP issued by a local government under this delegation may be appealed to the Commission not only by an aggrieved member of the public, but also by the Commission's Executive Director or any two members of the Commission. Very few eligible local governments have elected to take advantage of either of these two alternatives.

4. The Secretaries of the Resources Agency, the Business and Transportation Agency, and the State Lands Commission, or their designees, sit as *ex-officio* non-voting members.

Coastal Urbanization: Can Conflicting Interests Be Balanced?

Michael Stanton, FAIA

Growth in the state of California since the second World War has accelerated the pressures for change in the patterns of human habitation at the water's edge. New concepts for coastal communities such as Sea Ranch in Sonoma County have been executed. Destination hotels to serve the recreational user have been proposed: Some, such as the Inn at Spanish Bay on the Monterey Peninsula, have successfully accommodated a large program of uses on an environmentally sensitive site while being executed in exemplary architecture. Others, such as Hyatt Hotel's proposal for Goleta in Santa Barbara County, have engendered bitter controversy between the community and the developer, the legal resolution of which has redefined land use review and approval standards. Existing communities on the water are also pressured to change.

This article reviews two proposals for increased urbanization of the coast. One is a private developer's attempt to create a village focus in a largely industrial area of the San Mateo coast, and the second is a southern California community's effort to metamorphose its beach-front downtown into a modern, mixed-use urban neighborhood. The fate of projects such as these will help to illuminate the degree to which the state is willing to change habitation patterns in order to accommodate the pressures of its fast-growing population, and, by extension, to modify the physical reality of California's precious resource, the coast.

As Michael Burke pointed out in the preceding article, the Coastal Act represents an effort to balance conflicting interests. The Act seeks to preserve the unique qualities of the California coastline while, at the same time, to make it more accessible and convenient to the state's population by giving priority to the construction of visitor-serving facilities. The mechanism for resolution of conflicts that inevitably result from these laudable, but somewhat mutually exclusive, goals is not well-defined by the Act. Multiple layers of approval exist, and each reviewing body reconsiders basic facts. In situations where opposition is intense, the resolution of the matter is left to a lengthy judicial process. The stories of Princeton and Huntington Beach provide vivid examples of these conflicting interests and the dilemmas faced by all who are concerned with the future of coastal development.



Princeton's Pillar Point Harbor Village would be built on vacant land historically occupied by industrial uses. Courtesy, Fishing Village Associates.

PRINCETON, SAN MATEO COUNTY

Between Half Moon Bay and Pacifica in San Mateo County lies the unincorporated town of Princeton where the last acreage of Westinghouse Communities' once extensive San Mateo holdings remains. Located just north of San Mateo County's most active recreational and commercial fishing harbor at Pillar Point and inland of a local access thoroughfare Capistrano Road, this fifteen acres is zoned "visitor-serving commercial." This designation permits construction of accommodations for coastal visitors, support functions that facilitate the use of the coast (such as restaurants, food outlets, and gas stations), and a limited range of retail businesses related directly to coastal activity. The size of retail uses is restricted to less than 2,500 square feet to encourage small-scale development and precludes most forms of outlet and high-volume shopping.

In 1988, a Westinghouse Communities subsidiary approached my firm, Stanton & Associates Architects, to design the Pillar Point Harbor Village on this site. The proposed initial development was limited to approximately six acres of the property and would consist of an up-scale 84-room hotel, 11 family units used for extended stay, a large restaurant building, and approximately 45,000 square feet of small shops and additional food vendors. The intent behind the planning of the project was to use the Pillar Point Harbor Village as the first phase in the creation of a new Princeton village. The developer hoped, among other things, that the project would act as a catalyst for additional growth, and that, over time, adjacent vacant and underutilized parcels would be redeveloped into a more cohesive and diversified community. If successful, this effort would create a Princeton that never had existed. His-



Pillar Point Harbor Village. Stanton & Associates. The hotel is broken down into four different buildings that frame the public promenade along the harbor.

torically, the now vacant site of the Harbor Village had been occupied by gas stations, light manufacturing, and industrial business related to the harbor; and Princeton, despite a nostalgic self-perception of historic charm, had never been a commercial coastal village similar to Fort Bragg, Mendocino, or Monterey.

Working closely with the planning staff of San Mateo County over an 18-month period, the architects worked through several schemes and evolved a plan that satisfied the zoning requirements, addressed the developer's financial requirements, and provided a framework for a new Princeton. The agreed-to approach consisted of locating the hotel along Capistrano Road with all of its rooms oriented across to the south and west with water views. The main portion of the hotel was an articulated three-story mass containing 60 guest rooms symmetrical about an entrance *porte cochere* and public spaces of the

hotel. The remaining 24 rooms of the hotel were placed in three separate buildings east of the main structure. These separate structures break down the scale of what would have otherwise been an overly large element in the Princeton community and at the same time evoke the stately mansions of ship captains seen in coastal towns. Placed in a landscaped setback from the road, these hotel elements would also frame and strengthen the public promenade along Capistrano Road. The retail activities were oriented around a new interior street that is inland approximately parallel to Capistrano Road. The often inclement Half Moon Bay climate required that this narrow lane be enclosed; therefore, a simple greenhouse-like roof, reminiscent of the large commercial greenhouses for which the Half Moon Bay area is famous, would be floated continuously over this path. On the north side of the Harbor Village



Viewed from the north on Highway 1, the extended-stay family units of Pillar Point Harbor Village are expressed as individual buildings.

development, the 11 family units were located. These units were expressed as individual residences to reinforce the image of a village while at the same time screening the unadorned back walls of the retail street and providing an attractive vista for drivers headed south on Highway 1. The restaurant and some smaller retail structures enclosing plazas at each end of the commercial street completed the original design proposal.

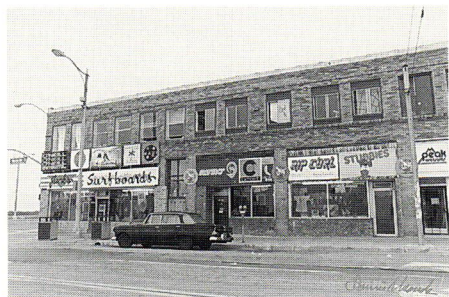
During staff approval of preliminary design, environmental assessment, and initial Planning Commission hearings, the Pillar Point Harbor Village faced no opposition. The development was positioned for final approvals in 1989 and construction in 1990 when homeowners in an adjacent neighborhood of El Granada, marching under a banner—*Concerned Citizens of the Coastsides*—organized a last-minute protest. Their objections were that the overall size of the development was inconsistent with the scale of the existing community, that traffic conditions already bad along Highway 1 would worsen after this development was completed, and that construction would block rare Highway 1 views of the masts in the harbor. These and other arguments failed to sway both the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors which approved the Pillar Point project and the California Coastal Commission which, after hearing the appeal of the Concerned Citizens of the Coastsides, also approved the Harbor Village.

The Concerned Citizens of the Coastsides then sued in court to stop the development. When the judge reversed the approval of the project and remanded it back to the County for additional environmental assessment, more litigation followed. The land owner responded by appealing the adverse ruling; the matter was finally resolved when the appellate court reversed the previous court's decision and cleared

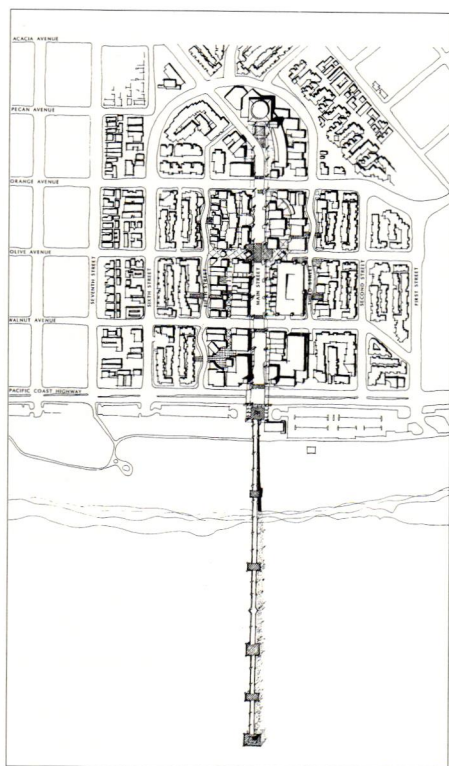
the way for the Harbor Village. By the time this decision was rendered in 1992, the recession had settled in and lending for projects such as the Harbor Village was impossible to procure: The project's future is now uncertain.

HUNTINGTON BEACH, ORANGE COUNTY

Urban aspirations of a very different sort are found in Southern California's community of Huntington Beach. Located between Newport Beach and Long Beach, this Orange County town was for years a sleepy resort community oriented toward its fine beach. Its commercial focus was the perpendicular intersection of Ocean Boulevard which parallels the coast and Main Street which is the inland extension of the municipal pier. In the past twenty years, Huntington Beach has evolved into a community of 190,000 people oriented toward Irvine, Costa Mesa, and the other business centers of Orange County. As this inland growth toward the freeway accelerated, the original downtown retail core with its shops and beach-oriented eateries has been largely abandoned by the residents of Huntington Beach in favor of automobile-friendly shopping centers. The old downtown now primarily serves tourists and weekend users of the beach. Downtown and the pier area are artifacts of a simpler Orange County—an undesigned historic district—surrounded by



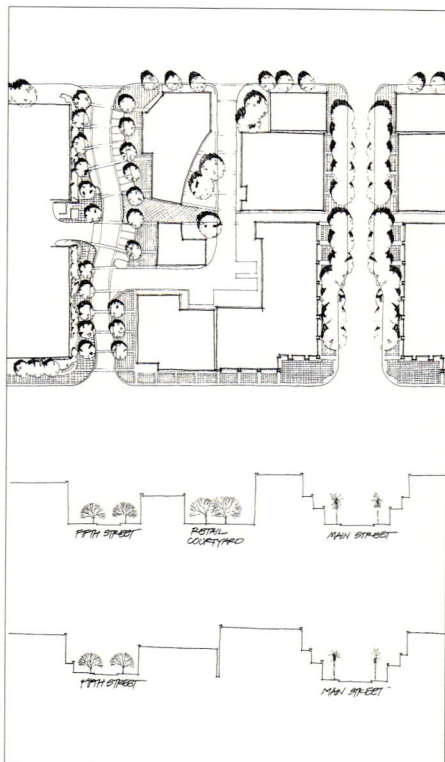
Huntington Beach shops. Photo, Denis Masuda.



Huntington Beach Conceptual Master Plan.
Langdon Wilson Architecture and Planning.

modern suburban-style, freeway-oriented development.

The decline in downtown commercial vitality has long been a concern for Huntington Beach politicians, and plans to preserve, change, improve, and modify downtown have occupied much of the municipality's energy. The most recent effort to be adopted was the 1989 plan that called for a massive commercial development including office towers up to thirty stories in height for downtown Huntington Beach. One element of this plan—a multilevel parking garage one block off of Main Street—was actually constructed. An alternative to the 1989 plan is currently under consideration. Under this master plan proposal authored by Langdon Wilson Architecture and Planning of Newport Beach, an extensive remake and intensification of development in a ten-block area would



Main Street, Huntington Beach Conceptual Master Plan.

transform downtown into a denser, mixed-use urban neighborhood. Specifically, the master plan would introduce a thousand new residential units in the central area. These new units would include affordable housing, middle class apartments, ownership units, and complexes for the elderly. The first two floors of Main Street extending from the pier would be redeveloped into 130,000 square feet of retail space oriented towards the street and a second level promenade. Included in this total area would be approximately 80,000 square feet of restaurants and a substantial theater complex. In addition to the retail commercial use, 120,000 square feet of corporate offices are proposed for the upper levels above the two-level retail promenade. If executed, the downtown Huntington Beach master plan would change Main Street from

its current pattern of one- and two-story commercial and professional service office spaces into four- to six-stories of more or less continuous commercial space. Along Ocean Boulevard, surf shops would be replaced with several levels of residential units above street-oriented shopping with structured parking behind. If successful, this proposal would change downtown into a more intense and vibrant 24-hour community around which, hopefully, Huntington Beach's dispersed civic and economic interests would again focus.

This proposal to turn Main Street into a Las Ramblas-like, mixed-use district perpendicular to the water's edge has yet to receive the full pressure of public scrutiny and environmental assessment. If it proceeds, it will likely face many of the same issues that confronted the advocates of Pillar Point Harbor Village. The economic engine that was to have supplied the demand for this plan has ground to a halt and, like Pillar Point Harbor Village, this version of California coastal urbanization may also be a victim of the 1990's economic slowdown. Even if this ambitious plan were executed, it is not certain it would succeed in luring people from the suburban shopping areas back to the long abandoned downtown—becoming Barcelona-on-San-Pedro-Bay. But one thing is clear; this plan and Huntington Beach's ongoing efforts to revitalize its downtown represent the desire of government and business leaders not to abandon their traditional civic orientation towards the water and pier.

What lessons can be drawn from these two proposals? The conflict inherent in the Coastal Act's dual intent to preserve the coast and encourage its use assures that the Act's provisions will be evoked by both sides in any debate on the appropriateness of a significant development proposal. Specific coastal plans prepared by individual counties in their attempt to ameliorate these con-

flicting goals often contain provisions that restrict innovative planning. For example, the specific plan governing the Pillar Point site precluded residential land use so that housing, a desirable component in community building, could not be included in the Harbor Village plan. In other areas, accommodating additional parking for coastal visitors compromises site planning. Additionally the Act's system of multiple approval and dispute resolution makes speedy clarification of its applicability to specific situations unlikely. And finally, the specific impact on California of the nation-wide economic recession is a clear part of this lesson, a critical element that must be addressed in the conflict resolution process.

While these observations suggest that larger-scaled development and innovative planning are very difficult to execute in California's coastal zone, the romance of living on the coast remains powerful. This attraction coupled with the Coastal Act's commitment to public use of coastal amenities and the increasing demands of our growing population suggest that future pressure on our existing coastal communities to recast themselves will intensify.

Edge of the Nation: A Federal Case

Peter Grenell

The California Coastal Conservancy, created in 1976 alongside the Coastal Commission which plans and regulates coastal development, is charged with the task of restoring coastal resources. In the Urban Waterfront Act of 1981, the Conservancy is mandated "to promote excellence of design and [to]...stimulate projects which exhibit innovation in sensitively integrating manmade features into the natural coastal environment." Peter Grenell, executive officer of the Conservancy, offers his perspective on the California coast as part of the national trust.

Winds of change now blowing through Washington, D.C., bring with them a fresh view and a will to positive action. As the federal government gears up for a new administration and a new congress, let us hope that it will actively acknowledge California's national importance and provide greater assistance for coastal resource protection. Although competing claims of other states must be balanced and issues of "equity" considered, the unique importance of California's coast to the nation must not be ignored.

California's population continues to grow, and roughly 80 percent of its 31 million people live along the coast. The state's most densely populated coastal areas include wetlands and estuaries that are among the most biologically productive, ecologically critical—and threatened—in the world. Immigration is concentrated in these same coastal areas. A recent study estimates

that 25 percent of all legal immigrants settle in California; and an even higher percentage of illegal entrants. The pressure on coastal resources is intense, and likely to intensify even more. According to some estimates, 50 million people may live in California within 20 years.

The human and natural resources of California's coastal region are of great value to the entire nation. Yet in recent years California has not received a fair share of federal funding from sources like the Land and Water Conservation Fund, Ocean and Coastal Resources Management (OCRM) funds, federal transportation funds, Environmental Protection Agency money, vari-



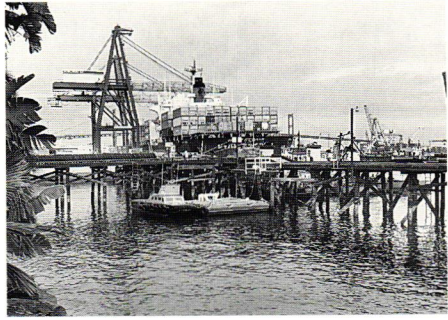
Arnold Hylen. *Terminal Island Warfside on Sunday Afternoon*. San Pedro, 1960. California State Library.

ous funds from Department of the Interior programs, and others.

The neglect undermines a coastal program that has been established for twenty years and erodes cost-effective efforts to protect and enhance coastal resources for the future. It leads to competition for pennies that is not only unproductive but also diverts scarce human resources from cooperative work underway.

One small example illuminates the issue. One-third of the state's coastal program, that component consisting of Coastal Conservancy activities, is zero funded by federal OCRM for the second year in a row. This is the nonregulatory part of the overall program, which creates significant economic and employment benefits for the state while protecting and restoring threatened and degraded natural habitat, scenic areas, and public facilities. Last minute cuts in the state budget of the Coastal Commission, apparently resulting from the state's overall deficit situation, led to the commission's assumption of federal OCRM funds previously allocated to the Conservancy. OCRM supported this move on the grounds that the Commission's regulatory activities came first. The amount in question? \$369,000—two percent of the total budget for the three state agencies with principal responsibility for the coast: the Coastal Commission, Coastal Conservancy, and San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

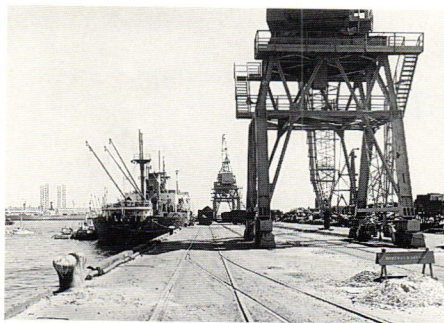
How does this play out "on the ground?" In the Morro Bay watershed, for example, one of many Coastal Conservancy projects addresses critical problems of protecting the biological productivity of estuarine ecosystems, while restoring vanishing wetlands and improving local agricultural and range management practices. Years of work with the local community, as well as with several federal, state, and local



William Reagh. *San Pedro I*, 1962. California State Library.

agencies, has led the community to an understanding that its economic well-being and quality of life depend on effective stewardship of its superb natural resources. Whether the community can act on that understanding, however, depends largely on whether financial support from the state and federal government is available. Regrettably, Morrow Bay was not included in the National Estuary Program, thus losing even the small amount of funds that could have flowed from this federal program. Morrow Bay is just one of many California coastal locations where a carefully planned investment of public funds now would yield multiple dividends for generations.

Comprehensive watershed planning is underway for major coastal rivers, including the Santa Margarita, Santa Clara, Russian, and Garcia Rivers. The focus is mostly on fisheries restoration and enhancement, protection and enhancement of wildlife habitat, flood control, and recreation. With an infusion of federal funding, these planning efforts would translate much more rapidly into projects that create employment while protecting the nation's natural resources. These projects would also diminish the need for costly public expenditures for dredging in coastal estuaries by keeping sedimentation upstream. Unfortunately, because of funding constraints, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's review of



William Reagh. *San Pedro II*, 1962. California State Library.

California's recent request for state wetland grant funds is considering funding only for the Santa Margarita River project.

The current deliberations over how many, and which, California military bases to close clearly highlights California's critical place in the national economy. It has already been noted that the country's rate of economic recovery is lagging because of California's serious recession-related impacts. Doubtless, California benefited from the expansion of federal military expenditures during the 1980s, and one could say that it is now time to pay the piper. On the other hand, previous federal administrations made no visible plans for eventual conversion to peaceful economic activities. This is nowhere more clearly evident now than in California. A vigorous and imaginative effort to design military base re-use alternatives, with concurrent economic arrangements to cushion those who have relied on military-related employment but who will be affected by closures, should indeed be a top priority of the new federal administration. Funds now spent on non-productive military activities could be shifted to a host of urgently needed infrastructural programs and other fronts to pay those now employed in defense industries.

The coastal, bay, and other shoreline locations of several California installations previously slated for closure

or now targeted are of special significance. Hunters Point Naval Shipyard, Hamilton Field, Moffet Field, Alameda Naval Air Station, Mare Island Naval Base, Oakland Army Terminal, and Treasure Island, all located on San Francisco Bay; Fort Ord on Monterey Bay, and Long Beach Naval Shipyard in southern California all are sited in major population clusters, and provide many significant opportunities for the design and development of coastal-dependent, water-oriented, or related activities that have economic, employment, and public use values. These rare opportunities should not be lost.

For the good of the nation, the federal government must begin to acknowledge, by a major shift in its funding practices, California's importance to the nation, the recent impacts of both the recession and natural disasters on its economy, the dimensions of its population problems, and the irreplaceable value of its coastal resources.

Adapted by the author from his editorial in California Coast & Ocean, Fall 1992.

The Shifting Images of Coastal California¹

David Gebhard, Hon. AIA

The lazy blue sea sending its rumble to the ear; the islands like a mirage upon its bosom, evoke the noble panorama of Camaldoli, or Positano, of Nervi, of Bordighera.

Ernest Peixotto²

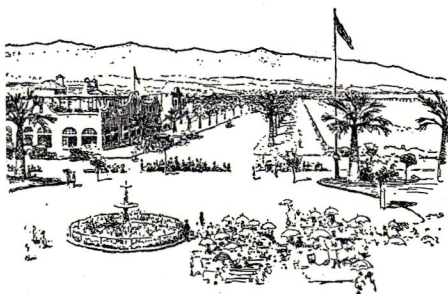
California, and especially the coast of California, has always had as much to do with romance and myth as with fact. In truth, it is close to impossible for visitors or residents to experience the relationship between ocean and coast except through a layered series of ideological glasses. But these layers of romance have not always been the same, nor, for that matter, have they always been present.

The Pacific coast of California is composed of a series of narrow, fragile environments, which, similar to many of the lands adjoining the Mediterranean Sea, do not extend for any great distance into the continent. But the coastal regions of California reveal a number of worlds that are in stark contrast to the Mediterranean lands. Though the California coast is indeed

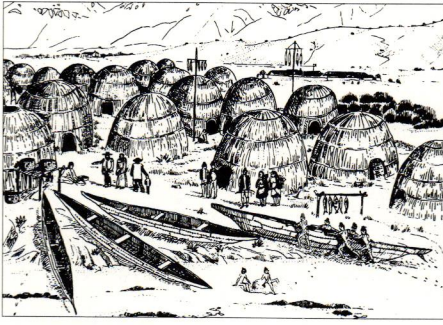
composed of a remarkable array of micro-environments, each with its own distinct personality, the effect of Europeans, since the entrance of Spain to the south and Russia to the north, has been that of trying bit by bit to erase these distinctions. The siting of cities, of groups of structures or single buildings, and the production of architectural images, has generally sought to minimize or completely destroy this variety, and through uniformity not only to tie the whole coast together but to suggest the connection of California with the rest of America and of Europe.

THE FRIENDLY AND UNFRIENDLY SHORE

The coast and the coastal waters had been inhabited by Native Americans for hundreds of years before their discovery by Europeans. At the time of the European incursion, the Karok and Hupa to the north, and the Chumash and the Luiseno to the south had established numerous villages on the coastal plains, some directly adjacent to the sandy beaches of the ocean itself. Their villages, composed of spilt-plank houses to the north, and domical grass covered houses to the south, fit softly into the terrain. The subsistence practices of these Native American—fishing in the ocean and gathering nuts and berries—did very little to modify the landscape of the coastal zone. Without overly romanticizing this early episode, it was a time of near complete harmony between people and their environment.



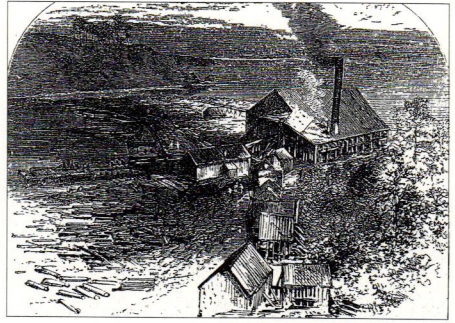
Plaza del Mar, Santa Barbara, from Ernest Peixotto, *Romantic California*, 1917.



Russell A. Ruiz, *Traditional Chumash Village*.
Courtesy, Santa Barbara Historical Museums.

The Spanish, and later on the Mexicans, viewed the Pacific Ocean as a transportation corridor—an umbilical cord that attached this sparsely settled region to the “civilized” lands of Mexico, Peru, and Spain. The eighteenth and early nineteenth century Hispanic coastal settlements, whether Mission churches, presidios, or pueblos were always built some distance from the ocean. The coast itself was a place to be avoided. The weather was generally considered to be far too cold, damp, and windy, and while the ocean was the benevolent connective link with civilization, it could also serve those who were unfriendly—marauding pirates or the ships and men of hostile nations.

The coastal enclaves that the Hispanic peoples created in California were essentially inland-oriented communities. The ocean’s presence was manifest by the effect of the Pacific currents on the land, but it did not make its visual presence felt. There were, to be sure, a few exceptions. The Presidio and Mission Church of Santa Barbara were situated in the upper reaches of a coastal valley so that they could enjoy a view of the ocean and the Channel Islands beyond. “The mission stands a little back of the town,” wrote Richard Henry Dana, Jr. in his 1840 classic *Two Years Before the Mast*, “...the whole being plastered, makes quite a show at a distance, and is the mark by which vessels come to anchor.”³ Yet the other

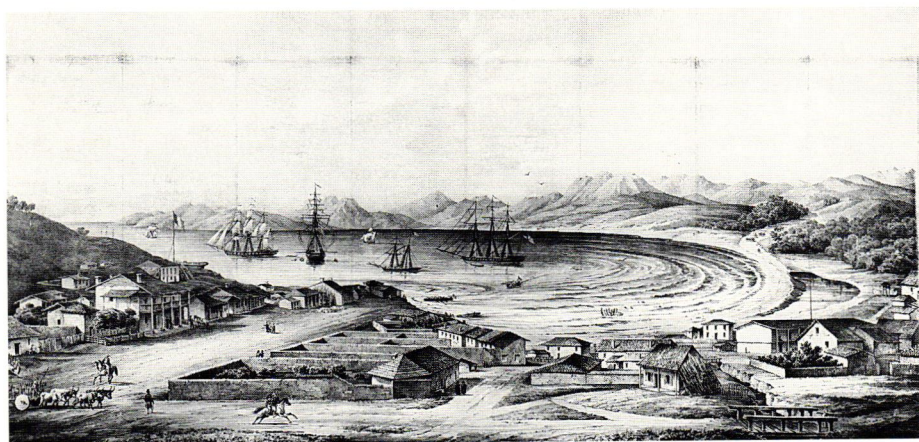


Saw mill. Charles Nordhoff, *Northern California, Oregon, and the Sandwich Islands*, 1874.

Mission complexes in Santa Barbara County—La Purisma Concepcion Mission near Lompoc and the Santa Inez Mission—like most missions, were established in inland river valleys. During the years that Alta California was ruled by first Spain and then Mexico, the land from the beach or cliff inland a mile or so was generally unoccupied except for an occasional warehouse.

When planning buildings, the Hispanic settlers, in a fashion classic for colonists throughout history, sought to recreate as closely as possible the structures with which they were familiar in Mexico or in distant Spain. For such a distant frontier area, it is surprising how up-to-date were a number of the late 18th, early 19th century churches of Alta California. They were generally simple and provincial in their construction and ornament, but the architectural images they employed—the late Churrigueresque of Spain or Mexico, and the then-fashionable Neo-Classical—were not that different from contemporary structures then being built in Spain and Mexico.

Whether built north of San Francisco Bay, as with San Francisco Solano in Sonoma, or San Diego de Alcala in San Diego to the south, the mission churches and their surrounding buildings were meant to convey uniformity. San Carlos Borromeo was situated in the lower reaches of the Monterey Peninsula and San Luis Rey



Harbor and City of Monterey, 1842. Gildermeir Lithograph. Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

de Francia placed among the gentle rolling hills of southern California—two very different coastal environments; yet the design of these buildings was meant to deny these environmental differences.

The sense of the ocean and the immediate coast as an unfriendly place continued unabated through the mid-nineteenth century. To be sure, the newly arrived Anglos brought a new set of architectural images that they employed in a fashion identical to the Hispanic peoples who had preceded them. Buildings reveal traces of the late Anglo Federal style or that of the Greek Revival, either as shimmering white clapboard buildings or as adobe structures modified by Classical elements. But it should be noted that the northern California coastal village of Mendocino, with its white clapboard houses and Masonic Hall (1865) and its siting on a high bluff, does not offer anything approaching the intimate contact between sea and land that one normally experiences in a New England seaside village.⁴

South of Mendocino, the coastal landscape was dotted with Anglo green-shuttered, white clapboard Greek Revival houses, churches, and other buildings. Most of these structures looked not to the ocean but toward the land itself. Even those located quite close to

the coast, like the small Trussell-Winchester house in Santa Barbara (1854) or the much grander Banning House in San Pedro (1864), were not really sited or designed to establish a clear visual rapport with the nearby ocean.

During much of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth the Anglo approach to the coast was, as it was elsewhere throughout the country, to treat the coast as a zone for economic activities. Warehouses, saw mills, and eventually long wood piers projecting out into the ocean dotted the coast from the Oregon border to Mexico. By the 1880s almost all of the coastal zone had been appreciably modified by timbering, by grazing, and by agriculture. From the very beginning non-native vegetation had continually been introduced, ranging from various species of citrus to the Australian Eucalyptus.

THE COAST AND THE ROLLER COASTER

Changes in the way the coast might be used began to come to the fore in the 1870s, due to an inland phenomenon—the completion of the transcontinental railroad and the continuation of spur lines leading to or along the coast. The perception of the ocean as something to

be viewed, and especially in the Southland as a place to bathe, reflected a major shift in public perception. Coastal California was no longer a distinct frontier—it could now become a pleasure resort, hopefully akin to the Riviera of France, the Brighton coast of England, or the New Jersey shoreland.

At first this new approach to the coast was pursued in a gingerly fashion. The Arlington Hotel in Santa Barbara (designed in 1875 by Peter J. Barber), the first of the coastal resort hotels, was sited halfway between the mission church and the harbor. In the north, the Hotel del Monte (designed by Arthur Brown, Sr. and built by the Pacific Improvement Company in 1879), was situated in the woods of the Monterey Peninsula, far away from the sea. Though the del Monte was described as a “...monster home of quaint Swiss architecture,”⁵ it, like the Arlington in Santa Barbara, was simply a reasonably fashionable variation of the then-popular late Italianate and Eastlake Style (the Stick Style). Similarly-designed hotels were being built in the Northeast and throughout the United States, so there was nothing distinct in either plan or detail about these early California coastal hotels.

Though the beauty of the natural environment of the Monterey peninsula and of the Santa Barbara coast were themselves major inducements, it was not accidental that both of those locales also possessed “quaint” relics of non-Anglo history—the Hispanic village of Monterey, and the Mission church and adobes of Santa Barbara. George A. Crofutt in his 1880 *New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide* described Monterey as “...a quiet, sleepy old town...living on in the dreamy self-satisfied consciousness that the spirit of progress is at an end....”⁶ And Mary Cone noted in her 1876 *Two Years in California*, “To the traveler from the East who makes Santa Barbara the first

stopping place in southern California, it has a very foreign look...with its old adobe houses that look as though they had a heavy burden to support in the clumsy tiles which perform the office of roof for them.”⁷

The lure of the coast in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, whether in southern Europe or in California, was decidedly not a universal middle class dream. Rather it was as Crofutt observed “...for the better class of citizens...,” that is, the upper middle class and the wealthy.⁸ Whether one lived in San Francisco and took the train down to Monterey, or came by trans-continental rail, the urge to go to the coast was prompted by the desire to regain one’s health, to escape the day-to-day pressures of business, or simply to clip one’s coupons and have a pleasurable time.

By the 1890s, the coast of California south of San Francisco Bay was dotted with resort hotels. Santa Cruz came to be referred to as the “Newport of California” because of its hotels, and by 1890 it boasted the large Sea Beach Hotel.⁹ The boom of the 1880s in southern California sprinkled the coast from Santa Monica Bay to Coronado with beach resort hotels.¹⁰ As with other hotels constructed throughout the Southland, these coastal hostleries were built not simply as resorts on the beach, but as the principal come-on within land development schemes. The prime *raison d’être* of the hotels was as a symbolic drawing card, to encourage the purchase of the adjoining land for residential and perhaps commercial purposes.

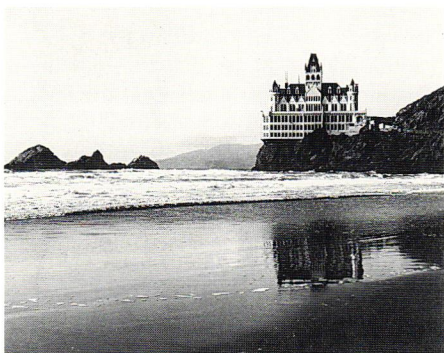
As with the hotels of the earlier decade, those constructed at the end of the 1880s employed an imported Anglo style, that of the Queen Anne Revival. These rambling buildings created a romantic image posed against the distant waters of the Pacific—a picturesque silhouette of varied roofs, gables, and dormers, broken by turrets and towers.

The Del Coronado in Coronado (designed in 1886-1888 by James and Merritt Reid) made a slight gesture to regionalism through its interior courtyard, but on the whole these shingle and clapboard “piles” perfectly matched those in the East, the South, and the Midwest.

Another ingredient taken from the Anglo East was the association of the sea with the late nineteenth century phenomenon of the amusement park. As in the East, the coastal amusement park marked one of the first major inroads of the middle and “artisan” classes into the beach area. Santa Cruz abandoned any pretense to be the West’s Newport and built its first roller coaster in 1884. By the early 1880s Santa Monica and nearby Venice, and Ocean Beach in San Diego, had their pleasure piers and other amusements. A closely related episode that compromised the elitism of the beach was the introduction of bathhouses and entire tent cities on the beaches. At first these were private, such as the Sutro Baths in San Francisco; but public bath houses were later built in Santa Barbara and elsewhere. More and more the beach was becoming a playground for all classes of people (still for Anglos, not for Hispanics, Asians, or blacks).

THE COAST AND THE ANGLO MIDDLE CLASS

In general, the mid- to late-nineteenth century Anglo cities were laid out along the coast according to pure and simple grid schemes. Along the northern coast, Eureka’s 1850 grid plan made a slight nod to the non-cardinal points orientation of Humboldt Bay. In the south, Santa Monica’s grid of 1875 could just as well have been in Kansas or Ohio, except for the eventual inclusion of a boulevard directly atop the coastal cliff. But when a scheme was directed toward



Cliff House, San Francisco, 1896. Architectural Drawing Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

the upper middle class, the right angle geometry of the grid was modified or completely disregarded. The plan for Coronado of 1886 exhibited a series of grand boulevards, a central plaza, and a beach-oriented roadway, upon which were to be constructed “substantial” homes. To the north, Del Monte, with its famed 17 Mile Drive, mirrored the approach taken to the irregular eighteenth century English picturesque gardens. At first 17 Mile Drive itself was essentially a romantic woodland road used for excursions from the hotel; but by the turn of the century, retreats for the wealthy were being built along it and in other parts of the peninsula.

By the end of the 1880s, the woodsy vocabulary of the late Queen Anne and early Colonial Revival was being challenged by two very different approaches to design—the Craftsman bungalow and the Mission Revival. The bungalow with its avowed “democratic” overtones suggested not only a return to the frontier life, but also it came to symbolize the American ideal of a universal middle class: one of California’s twentieth century “gifts” to the world. That the timber-poor Los Angeles region, rather than San Francisco, became the recognized bungalow capital of America illustrates how modern machine production and inexpensive rail and boat transportation could easily

destroy the bases for any regional variations. The universalism of the coastal bungalow can be seen throughout much of Manhattan Beach, (laid out in 1897), which was characterized in its PR releases as "a quiet bungalow colony." In nearby Long Beach, the brothers Charles and Henry Greene set one of their two-story bungalows (for the Tichenor family, 1904) on top of the low cliff overlooking the ocean. Far to the north, in the coastal lumber town of Fort Bragg, a colony of middle class bungalows was built (ca. 1910); except for the northern vegetation, one could easily imagine it was Pasadena or Altadena.

THE NEW WORLD'S MEDITERRANEAN SHORE

The Mission Revival was California's first fling at regional independence from the succession of dominant fashions imported from the northeast. As with the bungalow, the center of this revival

was the Southland, reaching from San Diego to Santa Barbara. But the image of the Mission, with its plain white stucco walls, arched openings and red tile roofs, was not limited to the south. Mission Revival hotels, railroad stations, stores, bungalow courts, and dwellings were built throughout California, including the coastal zone, north and south. In the hands of gifted designers, such as Irving J. Gill, Mission villas were posed atop the coastal cliffs of La Jolla. While we today tend to respond to his designs as highly abstract geometric forms, their images were generally seen by contemporaries as forms that evoked the Missions of California, as well as the buildings of the African and European coasts of the Mediterranean.

To a marked degree, the turn of the century Mission Revival represents California's first major effort to openly respond to the presence of the coast. The transformation of California into a "new and much improved" Mediterranean world was bound up with horticulture, architectural images, and the "reality" of ideological illusions. Initially, the Mission Revival referred to California's late eighteenth, early nineteenth century Hispanic past, but this was almost immediately broadened to include the Mediterranean coast of Italy, France, Spain, and North Africa. Southern California's own Venice, with its canals, arched bridges, and its own version of the Doge's Palace, was laid out and partially built in 1904.¹¹ A little further south, near Long Beach, the theme of Italy and canals appeared in Naples (founded in 1905).

It is difficult for us today to sense the general unanimity and intensity of the desire in the 1910s and 1920s to see California as the New World's Mediterranean shore. The hills and cliffs facing onto the Pacific were to be dotted with gleaming white-walled and red tiled villas (such as Charles Greene's James



Panama California International Exposition, Balboa Park, San Diego, 1915. Bertram G. Goodhue and Carleton M. Winslow. Architectural Drawing Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.



Venice, California, 1905. March and Graham. Architectural Drawing Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

House, Carmel, 1918), and hotels, and here and there were to be Spanish villages. Typical of these villages was San Clemente, on the coast near the ruins of California's largest Mission complex; the Mission San Juan Capistrano was conceived of in 1925 as "a village done in the fashion of Old Spain."¹² The upper middle class suburban development of Palos Verdes (designed between 1922-1925 by Olmsted and Olmsted, and Charles Cheney) was planned around several Spanish villages (only one of which was built, Malaga Cove Plaza).¹³ The most perfect allusion to the coast of Mediterranean Spain and France, with their mountains dropping down to the sea occurred in Montecito, Santa Barbara, and Hope Ranch. Here, Bertram G. Goodhue, George Washington Smith, and other architects sited their hillside villas so that from the ocean they did indeed look like a watercolor landscape sketched in southern France by Paul Cezanne.

The Mediterranean illusion was carried north to Monterey Peninsula. In 1925, the Monterey Peninsula Country Club at Pebble Beach was laid out, and during the remaining years of the decade, Mediterranean villas were built on the hills overlooking the golf course and directly on the cliffs above the water. These included a wide array of Mediterranean modes, ranging from the highly personal interpretations of Bernard

Maybeck (Ford House, Pebble Beach, 1922), to California's only Byzantine villa (the Fagan/Crocker House, 1924-28) designed by George Washington Smith.

The unanimity of creating the Mediterranean image, whether Spanish or Italian, was never, of course, total. Other historic allusions to America's and California's European heritage occurred during the 1920s and 1930s. In Oceanside, north of San Diego, the St. Malo Club (1929) established a 27-acre beachfront enclave whose architecture was exclusively French Norman, with the houses having picturesque steep roofs and walls of rough brick, cobblestone, half timber and stucco. Carmel Village, which emerged after 1900 as California's Bohemian hideaway, leaned towards the Hansel and Gretel literary world of the medieval fairy tale and of the doll house.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY COAST

Both in land planning and in the realm of architectural imagery, the decade of



James House, Carmel, 1918. Charles Greene. Photo, Esto.

the 1930s perfectly represented Anglo *laissez-faireism*. These were the years that extensive alterations were made to the coast, especially the creation of artificial harbors, such as those off Long Beach and San Pedro. Stretches of the coast emerged as closely-packed beach colonies displaying the full gamut of architectural imagery, ranging from a continuation of historic illusionisms to the new references to the Machine—both Streamline Moderne (Art Deco) as well as the high art Modern. The coast as a locale for the machine is beautifully illustrated at Sea Cliff, south of Santa Cruz, where a group of Streamline Moderne houses posed as ocean liners stranded on the beach. In the south, narrow strands of beachlands at Carpinteria, Malibu, and Santa Monica house an amazing potpourri of architectural images. White painted board and batten cottages are situated next to clapboard shuttered Colonial Revival houses, which in turn might be adjacent to the curved forms of a stucco, steel, and glass Streamline Moderne house.

The post World War II years, from the late 1940s through 1960, witnessed much of the same variation, except historic allusions declined and Modernism increased. With only a few exceptions, this version of Modernism conveyed a sense of easy-going livability, rather than the new twenty-first century Arcadia of the Machine. This shift reflects a different view of the coast and the ocean from that of the 1910s and 1920s. The romance of the Pacific Coast as the New Mediterranean with its references to history and culture, was replaced by the narcissism of pleasure. The beach and the water were a place to play. Along stretches of the California coast, the state began to organize urban beaches and state parks; while in the private sector, marinas were built to provide waterside living and increased accommodations for pleasure craft. Both of these phenomena meant that



The Beach at Santa Monica, 1928. Architectural Drawing Collection, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

more extensive sections of the actual beach would be open to the public—meaning the middle class and their children. The first marinas, in San Francisco Bay, in Ventura, and south to San Diego, were priced and directed to the middle and upper classes. All of these early marinas maintained the same low village profile that had occurred in the earlier beach colonies. Like Cliff May's popular ranch house, the design of these usually attached dwellings was both lightly historic and modern, to symbolize the easy going pleasure-oriented life of their inhabitants.

Though a few high-rise apartments had been built on the coast in communities such as Santa Monica and Long Beach in the 1930s, most of California's shoreline had remained relatively free of this twentieth-century malady. Slowly, in the 1960s and 1970s, the horizontal scale of California's coast began to be compromised by walls of high-rise towers. In a few rare instances, such as Louis I. Kahn's Salk Institute at La Jolla (1959-65), the towers composed themselves as an impressive modern castle set alone high on a hill. But generally most of the slab high-rises built on the coast in the 1960s and 1970s were bland to the extreme; and not only did they ruthlessly destroy the scale of the buildings around them, they equally compromised the natural character of the coast itself.

The traditional view that the seaside should provide a retreat for the upper middle class continued on into the post World War II decades. The Sea Ranch development, located on the northern California coast, has, since its establishment in 1965, received the acclaim of planners and architects. Though the ocean, cliffs, and wooded hills behind are spectacular, the climate in and around the Sea Ranch is not. Cold winds and fog have always made this site, and the northern coast in general, an undesirable place to live. The triumph of the Sea Ranch is that in its initial planning (by Lawrence Halprin and Associates), and in the siting and design of the buildings (Joseph Esherick and Associates; Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, Whitaker; and others), it solved many of the negative environmental problems.

The imagery employed at the Sea Ranch—that of the woodsy Third Bay Tradition—played a fascinating visual game between traditionalism and the modern. Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, Whitaker's Condominium I (1965), with its vertical “mine shaft” volumes topped by a multiplicity of shed roofs, quickly established a fashionable style which became the rage throughout the United States and abroad. Variations on the theme occurred all along the California coast from San Diego to San Francisco Bay and beyond. By the seventies, many of these Moore-esque designs (named for the architect Charles W. Moore, FAIA) began to embrace the (Hispanic) Mediterranean imagery of California. In their site planning, and in their use of stucco walls and tile, there was more than a casual hint that once again we were experiencing a modernized Spanish village by the sea. Moore himself openly suggested this connection in his Faculty Club at the University of California at Santa Barbara (1967); and the Bay Area firm of Fisher-Friedman Associates has indi-



Condominium I, Sea Ranch, 1965. Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull, and Whitaker. Photo, author.

cated a similar direction in many of their condominium projects, of which Promontory Point (1973-74) at Newport Beach is a characteristic example.

In the late 1970s and now into the early 1990s California has, more intensely than the rest of the country, experienced a plagiarism of Revivals. Historicism, of a sort, is back in fashion again. Only this time, the historian looks not to original sources, like California's own Hispanic adobes and Missions or the historic architecture of the Mediterranean. Rather, the backward look focuses on the Revival architecture of the 1920s. This is, in a way, an outright nostalgia, in which architecture merely provides a needed stage set. As elsewhere in the state, the coast now has its own recent array of Spanish, Italian, French Norman, and English half-timber Tudor motels, restaurants, shopping centers, condominiums, and all too large single family houses. Very few of these are executed well, for conviction and knowledge appear to be lacking on the part of client, architect, and in many cases, the landscape architect. Certainly these revivalist buildings do not express any new coherent sympathy with the coast of California as a series of special environments.

In a referendum passed in 1972, Proposition 20, California adopted a new public policy in planning for coastal changes and development. This led to the creation in 1976 of the

Coastal Commission and the Coastal Conservancy. The general positive results from this act are now, after some twenty years, quite apparent. Public access has been increasingly provided, new developments have been limited, and often some form of architectural review has been initiated. The planning and replanning of sections of the coastal zone have now been tied to broad environmental issues. While the planning of new developments has been appreciably improved, it should be noted that the architecture and landscape architecture has not, with the fewest of exceptions, been much enriched.

THE NEED FOR A GUIDING IMAGE

Nostalgia aside, the years that spanned 1900 through the early 1930s were unique in that a commonly accepted positive view of how to respond to the unique qualities of the California coast coalesced. These years achieved their success because the California coast was visualized through historical reference and, by association, historical continuity was imagined. The idea of what the coast symbolized became far more significant than the actual fact of hills, beach, surf, and ocean. It was this theme which Moore embraced in Condominium I at the Sea Ranch. Similar themes have been hinted at in various coast projects since then, but none of them realized the potential suggested in the initial planning and then the architecture of the Sea Ranch.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was published in Joseph E. Petrillo and Peter Grennel (eds.), *The Urban Edge: Where the City Meets the Sea* (Oakland: The California State Coastal Conservancy, in cooperation with William Kaufmann, Inc., 1985).

2. Ernest Peixotto, *Romantic California* (New York: Scribner's, 1917), 3.

3. Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: New American Library, 1964), 57.

4. Federal Writers' Project, U.P.A., *California: A Guide to the Golden State* (New York: Hastings House, 1954), 320.

5. Federal Writers' Project, U.P.A., *Monterey Peninsula* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), 56.

6. George A. Crofutt, *New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide* (Omaha: Overland Publishing Co., 1880), 224.

7. Mary Cone, *Two Years in California* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs, 1876), 89-90.

8. Crofutt, op. cit., 224.

9. John Chase, *The Sidewalk Companion to Santa Cruz Architecture* (Santa Cruz: Paper Vision Press, 1979), 23-26.

10. Prominent among these were the Arcadia in Santa Monica (Boring and Haas, 1887), the Redondo in Redondo Beach (1887), the Long Beach in Long Beach (1884), and the still standing Del Coronado Hotel in Coronado (James W. and Merritt Reid, 1886-88).

11. Norman F. Marsh, "Venice of America," *Architect and Engineer* 3, January 1906: 19-25; Annette Del Zoppo and Jeffrey Stanton, *Venice California 1904-1930* (Venice: ARS Publications, 1978).

12. Homer Banks, *The Story of San Clemente* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1930).

13. Charles H. Cheney, "Palos Verdes, Eight Years of Development," *The Architect and Engineer* 100, January, 1938: 35-83.

Southern California Piers: Civic Architecture at the Water's Edge

Keenan E. Smith, AIA

PIERS AND THE IMAGE OF THE SOUTHLAND

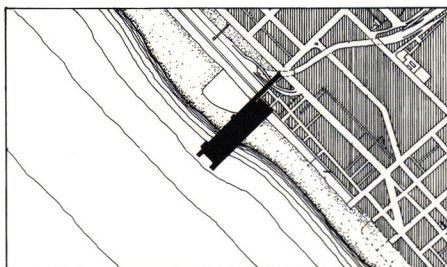
"Ocian in view. O, the joy!"

William Clark
Journals of Lewis & Clark

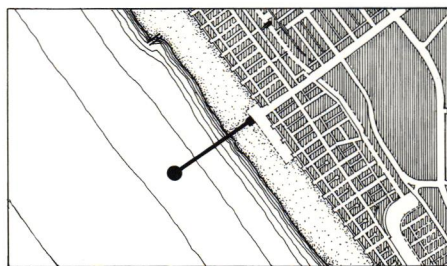
As a class of structures, waterfront wharfs have long played a strategic and symbolic role in the development of coastal cities, and Southern California's deep-water municipal piers are no exception. Bridging the imprecise line between a continent and an ocean, linear thrusts of a sprawling metropolis into a watery, offshore wilderness, they create man-made 'stitches' that metaphorically join the separate realms of city, sea, and sky.

Punctuating the beach with periodic regularity, the piers are points of enormous public concentration and focus. As highly visible individual structures, they are also objects of civic pride and community identity, providing both planning rationale and cultural soul for numerous "Beach Cities." Moreover,

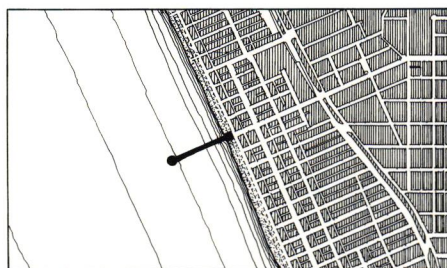
having long since transcended the economic prerogatives from which they originated, the piers now serve as the true *genus loci* of Southern California's greatest public open space—The Beach.¹ Enduring and transforming over time, the piers of the Southland have become



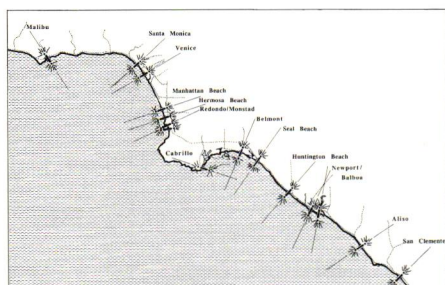
Santa Monica



Venice



Manhattan Beach



Straddling the line between continent and ocean, the piers are 'stitches' joining city, sea, and sky.

The piers are integral to the planning rationale and cultural soul of numerous "Beach Cities."

entwined with the emerging myth of the "California Lifestyle," which persists today. Their images, and the indelible experiences associated with them, are firmly etched in the collective consciousness and post-card self-portraits of "The Beach," and the urban landscapes of the Southern California coast are decorated with their memorable forms.

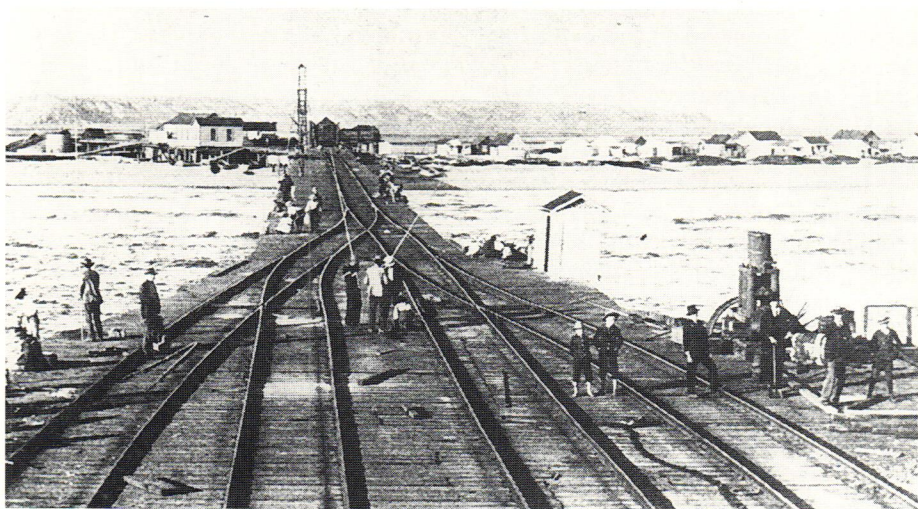
The piers represent not only "the most representative structures in Surfurbia," to use Reyner Banham's term, but a distinct category of public places in Southern California's idiosyncratic public realm.² Today, the preservation, restoration, and evolving redevelopment of these structures and their environs underscore their value as vital pieces of civic architecture, public infrastructure, and urban design. This essay treats piers as aesthetic objects, cultural artifacts, and civic symbols contributing to the physical and social fabric of a metropolitan region.

THE EVOLVING GENRE OF PIERS

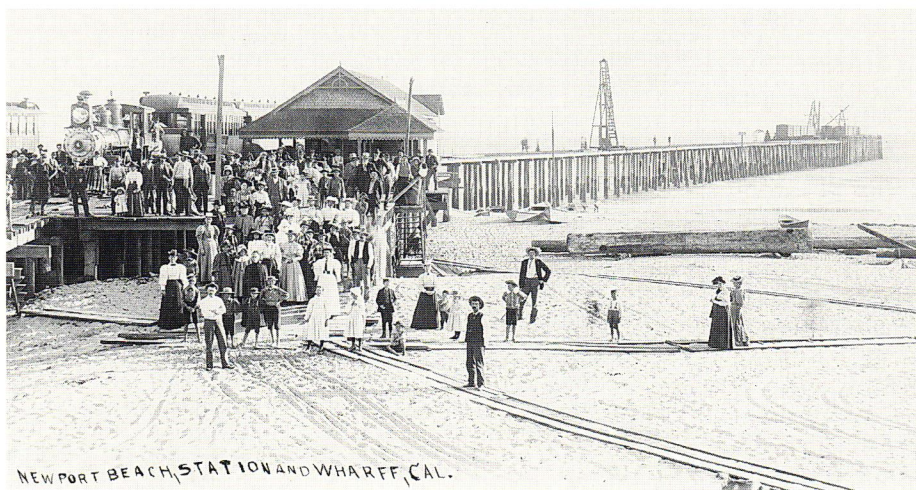
When the first commercial wharfs were projected into the open ocean in the late

nineteenth century, they were straightforward, technological solutions to the lack of safe harborage and natural bays on this stretch of the coast.³ These were first and foremost objects of private enterprise, whose primary form, function, and construction facilitated transfer of goods from deep-water vessels to the termini of working rail spurs. Under the aegis of headstrong entrepreneurs and ambitious agents of the railroad, structures at Wilmington-San Pedro (1858), Santa Monica (1875; 1893), McFadden Wharf (Newport Beach, 1888), and Redondo Beach (1893) thrust out to intercept coastwise shipping and travel, and struggled to establish their beach-head environs as significant places for regional and local economic development.⁴ Yet, almost immediately, these rough wooden structures were appropriated for public purposes as well. On Sundays, early photographs depict their edges crowded with people fishing, while children and long-skirted strollers skipped and promenaded over idle tracks.⁵

This transformation from working waterfront structures to elements of the public domain was precipitated by fun-



McFadden Wharf (Newport Pier), c.1890. Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company.



Newport Pier, c.1900. Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company.

damental changes in commercial transportation. In the years following the arrival in Los Angeles of the transcontinental railroad, trains competed with schooners and steamships as the primary mode of coastwise shipment.⁶ By the late 1880s the railroads secured a monopoly on freight and initiated a fare war that promoted the first real boom of settlement, depositing hordes of homesteaders, urban immigrants, health seekers, and tourists on the fertile coastal plain.⁷ The era of the open roadstead shipping pier came to an end in the first decade of the Twentieth Century, spurred by the construction in 1910 of the 11,000 foot breakwater at San Pedro for a true "Port of Los Angeles."

Despite the demise of the open water shipping pier, the emergence and proliferation the inter-urban Pacific Electric Railway system heralded a new era of coastal development and touched off the construction of a new generation of piers. Just as the rail spurs replaced the arduous stagecoach routes of the 1870s for primary coastal access, the Pacific Electric quickly and aggressively subordinated and subsumed rail service to beach destinations, and Los Angeles began its well-documented "leapfrog to the sea."⁸ By 1908 the tentacles of the

interurban reached the coast from Santa Monica to Balboa, engendering a series of resort communities that depended primarily on the faithful economic duplicity of resorts and real estate.⁹ The Red Cars afforded easy access to sprouting resort hotels and freshly subdivided lots, while piers such as the ones at Pacific City (Huntington Beach-1903), Balboa (1906), and Redondo Beach (1907) introduced increasing numbers of residents, visitors, and the ever-present real estate speculators to the Southern California beaches. The newcomers capitalized one and all on the cooling breezes, abundant fishing and "healthful airs" of this newly discovered "Mediterranean" seascape, and gravitated to the boardwalks, beach parks and "resort piers" to take it all in.¹⁰

These factors complemented each other in fundamentally recasting the public image of the coast. The mariner's myth of an inhospitable, treacherous coastline on an ocean whose lack of tranquil refuge belied its "pacific" qualities, was recast to serve an emerging "culture of leisure." Populated by a swelling middle class, the new attraction to the shore evolved not from the requisites of livelihood, work, and toil at the water's perilous edge, but from the



Pacific Electric station at the foot of Huntington Beach Pier, c. 1910. Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company.

softer pleasures of its climate, vistas, and pastimes.¹¹

The Southern California fascination with piers continued to evolve during the Progressive Era. During this “golden age of piers,” they continued to be built as the formal nuclei and development catalyst for booster-driven attempts to lure a new generation of potential real estate buyers. Once in place, these structures captured the imagination of a region becoming economically robust and self-aware, particularly of its unique potential for recreational lifestyles. This mood continued to build through the turn of the century and the development of the “pleasure piers,” such as existed at Santa Monica, Pacific Ocean Park, Venice, and Seal Beach, which combined carnivalesque spectacle with the more maritime activities of fishing and bathing in the surf.¹²

After the “Great War,” changing patterns of transportation and tourism caused the pleasure piers to fall into decay and ruin. Due to this process of attrition, assisted by decades of relentless storms, several of the earlier piers were rebuilt. Some were fitted (entirely or in part) with reinforced concrete piles and decking, vastly improving their

longevity, albeit with certain aesthetic consequences (which deserve separate and critical scrutiny). Access to the excellent salt-water fishing beyond the breaker line continued to be the primary “purpose” associated with the mid-century reconstructions. License-free fishing, plus a growing concern for public coastal access in the wake of the Proposition 20 in the early seventies, provided the impetus and rationale for the region’s newest piers, such as Aliso Pier in South Laguna (1972).¹³

THE PLACE OF PIERS

As they exist today, the piers of the Southland have come to express an authentic essence of place that transcends issues of aesthetics, image, and symbol. Perpetually offering up the recurring spectacle of the sunset, the ritual lover’s promenade, the fortunes of fishermen and the timeless frolics of sand and surf, these structures span not only the connections between earth, sea and sky, but merge the gaps that separate age, class, color, creed, and generations as well. Like bridges, piers possess a wonderful aesthetic and experiential

alchemy, able to visually fuse strongly demarcated landscapes while retaining individual and distinct qualities of artifice, all informed and enriched by changing human purposes and constant public use.

For the observer, these attributes promote a heightened awareness, a consciousness in the experience of these places that endow them with a compelling civic importance, or *civitas*. This 'amping-up' in shared sense-perception is attributable directly to the concentrated human use of place, what Kevin Lynch would have called characteristics of a "thematic node."¹⁴ This perceptual importance in the public eye and mind works to elevate both the locational prominence of the piers and a virtual public 'possession' of them. Charles Moore articulated the 'place' of piers when he spoke of the end of Santa Monica's as "a reverse fountain, a festive meeting of architecture and water, with people in the middle and the waves all around."¹⁵

Thus, while the piers first served to ratify the particular functional and economic geographies of their sites, once built, they acquired through public appropriation and civic use, certain inalienable qualities of place. These qualities are continually manifested and re-affirmed by the congregational popularity of the piers and their role as sites for ritual meetings and broad-based social interaction.

PIERS AS CULTURAL ARTIFACTS

There is a sense in which the beach is the only place in Los Angeles where all men are equal and on common ground.

Reyner Banham¹⁶

As manifestations of Southern California culture, the piers serve yet a higher social purpose. They are rare stages for un-programmed, non-commodified public interaction given the scant offer-



Huntington Beach Bandstand, 1910. Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company.

ings of public space. On any given visit a representative sample of the broad mosaic of cultures and the amazing social diversity constituting the region is plainly evident. Surfers, fishermen, strollers, tourists, beach locals, inland day trippers, drawn from all races, creeds, occupations, lifestyles, income levels, and political persuasions of the Southland mix freely and peaceably (for the most part) in a shared place.

Elements of unification, the piers persist in bringing unrelated people together for chance and ritual encounters and a common, real-time experience which is the operative definition of "public space."¹⁷ In this sense, the piers are critical elements in sustaining a "public realm" in a region whose planning and urban design preferences more often forsake traditional models of urban space. As a social phenomenon then, they represent loci of a vital intercourse that deserve study as models for designing public spaces of the future. Perhaps the lessons of the piers could

inspire new additions to the public realm in Southern California that, like the piers, overtly perpetuate a social order encouraging familiarity, tolerance, and respect, rather than fear, ignorance, and contempt.

One measure of the historical and cultural significance of any built work is the measure by which they are maintained, rebuilt, and preserved at public expense. As such, the piers rank collectively among the most treasured structures in Southern California. Exposed to the mercy of periodic winter storms, these structures suffer cataclysmic damage on a regular basis. Despite the well-known hazards and their disastrous consequences, reconstruction funds are nearly always raised. Relatively rapidly (politically speaking), bonds and other instruments of taxation are mustered to provide the resources necessary to reconstitute these objects of civic pride. It is therefore not surprising that the reopening of a rejuvenated pier is a great public event. In a recent example, on



The Joy Zone at Jewel City (Seal Beach) from the pier, c.1916. Historical Collection, First American Title Insurance Company.

July 18, 1992, crowds jammed the deck of the Huntington Beach Pier which had been partially destroyed during the devastating winter storms of 1988. The *Pierfest '92* festival celebrated the city's multi-million dollar reinvestment in its pier's future as well as its return to vital public use.¹⁸

EXPERIENCING PIERS

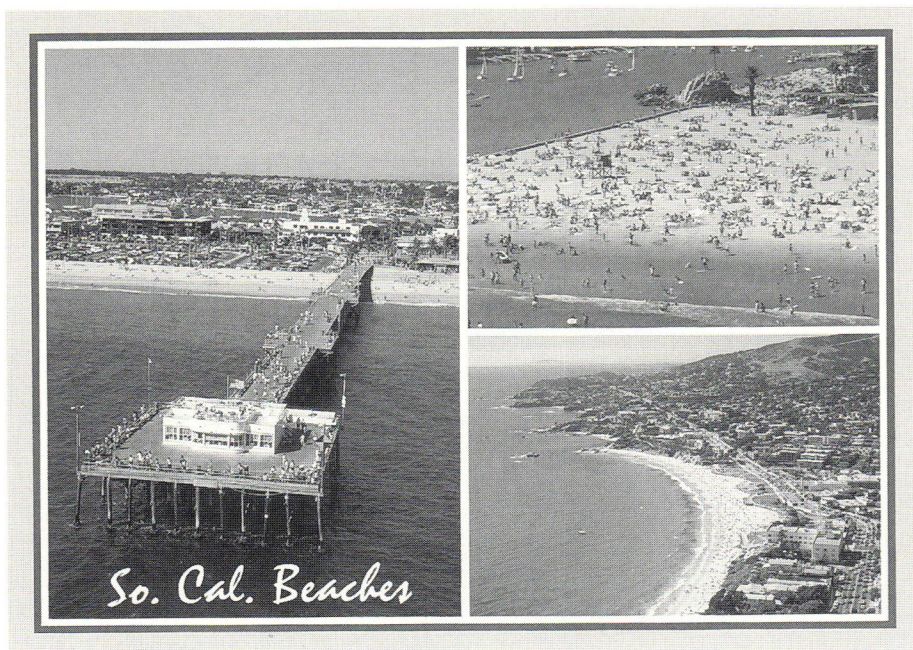
The rich, the poor, the young, the aged, the agile and the decrepit, the wise and the foolish, they stroll, stroll, each with his characteristic gait ... many with marks of sorrow and tragedy engraved in their faces—a cross-section of humanity.

James Clifford Safley
“Promenade,” Fisherman’s Pier¹⁹

The public enjoyment of the Pacific Ocean is clearly one of the defining elements of the Southern California

lifestyle, as manifested in the beach “scene” and a spectrum of popular water-oriented activities. The piers are platforms for the active and vicarious participation in this realm, including the direct experience of “getting out on the water” as a common pedestrian. Whether taking in the sensuality of Santa Monica Pier or the contemplative simplicity of Malibu, a walk on the pier is an egalitarian and characteristically Southern California tonic for the soul.

In the end, the piers breach the shore’s absolute finality: as emphatic gestures of a city that knows no limits they defy the edge of a continent and face an occasionally tempestuous ocean. Artificial pieces of cityscape suspended over the sea, these pieces of civic architecture at the waters’ edge extend the city while enabling an experiential departure from it. Within a short stroll a complete, elliptical journey unfolds: the sense of departing the familiar, coming for a time unto the midst of an unfa-



The images and experiences of the piers are ingrained in the collective consciousness and postcard self-portraits of The Beach. Photos, James Blank for Luna Bay Productions.



Huntington Beach Pier, July 18, 1992 during the re-opening celebration *Pierfest '92*. Los Angeles Times Photo.

iar world, and returning once again to the point of beginning. The sea, whose call is felt by nearly all, but is courted passionately only by mariners and a few daring sailors, is made approachable and accessible to all, tamed by a stable deck and encircling guardrails.

In this simple perambulatory orbit, one can imagine being temporarily empowered beyond mortal limits; becoming for a time a bit like Jesus at Galilee, walking on the waves. In these moments, this powerful illusion promotes a metaphysical disengagement from normative urban familiarities and attendant stress. These are places where Southern Californians go to take pause, to be reminded once more of the timeless and limitless qualities of nature, and to mix in the communal presence of fellows. Individuals, in solitude, pairs or groups, bend down toward the unattainable horizon and confront the human condition at a visceral level. Leaning on the balustrade, transfixed by the rhythmic sigh of the surf, a brisk sea

breeze, the silver sea and the purple silhouette of Catalina Island, lost in the mythical dream state of the California sunset, the human spirit slips (at least temporarily) the shackles of terrestrial life.

NOTES

1. Charles W. Moore, *The City Observed, Los Angeles: A Guide to its Architecture and Landscapes* (New York: Random House, 1984), 120.

2. Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles. The Architecture of Four Ecologies* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971), 53.

3. The forbidding nature of the South Coast was noted in the logs of the earliest explorers, including Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo (1542), Francis Drake (1579), and Sebastian Vizcaino (1602). For his part, Richard Henry Dana described the anchorage at Santa Barbara in 1835 as "...so large and so much exposed to the south-east and north-west winds, that it is little better than an open roadstead. The only ports which are safe [from the south-easter] are San Francisco and Monterey in the north, and San Diego in the south." Richard Henry Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1946), 44-45.

4. Phineas Banning established the Port of Wilmington and built its first wharfs in 1857-58; see Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California Through the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 51-52. Santa Monica's wharfs included *Shoo-Fly Landing*, which in the early 1870s loaded *brea* (tar) mined at Colonel Hancock's Brea Ranch onto steamers bound for San Francisco to pave its streets. This was replaced by the Los Angeles and Independence Railway Wharf and Depot in 1875, which was purchased and destroyed by the Southern Pacific Railway in 1879 in favor of a monopoly by their operations in San Pedro. In 1890-93, Collis Huntington built the *Long Wharf* at Santa Monica in an ironic and failed attempt to re-center the locus of the Port of Los Angeles. See Jean Femling, *Great Piers of California* (Santa Barbara, California: Capra Press, 1984), 60-61. The McFadden brothers built a deep water wharf in 1888 after their mixed successes with Newport Landing on the Back Bay in the 1870s. See Ellen K. Lee, *The Sandspit Pioneers*; James P. Felton, ed. *Newport Beach, The First Century, 1888-1988* (City of Newport Beach; Brea, California: Sultana Press, 1988), 23-27.

5. Felton, *Newport Beach*, 27.

6. The first Southern Pacific train rolled into Los Angeles in 1876; the Santa Fe followed in 1885. See *The WPA Guide to California* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 91; 211.

7. Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 49-50.

8. Spencer Crump, *Ride the Big Red Cars* (Los Angeles, 1962).

9. Rick Adams and Louise McCorkle, *The California Highway 1 Book: An Odology of America's Most Romantic Road* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 40.

10. Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 45; Adams and McCorkle, *The California Highway 1 Book*, 44, 46, 48.

11. Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, 66; for an excellent treatment of the shifting cultural landscape of the beach, see John R. Stilgoe, "Bikinis, Beaches & Bombs," *Orion Nature Quarterly* 3, (Summer 1984): 4-15.

12. Femling, *Great Piers of California*, 56-63; Banham, *Los Angeles*, 54.

13. Femling, *Great Piers of California*, 8-10; Proposition 20, approved by voters in 1972, prompted passage of the California Coastal Act and State Conservancy Acts, both of 1976; see State of California, California Coastal Commission, *California Coastal Access Guide* (rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, c. 1982), 14-15.

14. Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1960), 72-73, 75.

15. Moore, *The City Observed*, 121.

16. Banham, *Los Angeles*, 39.

17. For two very satisfying treatments of the nature of "public space," see Hannah Arendt,

"The Public Realm: The Common," *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) 50-58; see also Richard Sennett, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, James Wines, Roland Lee Fleming and Elyn Zimmerman, "Whatever Became of the Public Square," *Harper's Magazine* "Forum," (July 1990) 48-58.

18. *Los Angeles Times, Orange County Edition*, 3 December 1992: B1.

19. James Clifford Safley, *Fisherman's Pier* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1948), 138-139.

Pueblo Ribera: A CaseStudy in Site Responsive Design

*Silja Tillner, Assoc. AIA
Steven Flusty*

*The man of the future does not try
to escape the elements.*

He will rule them.

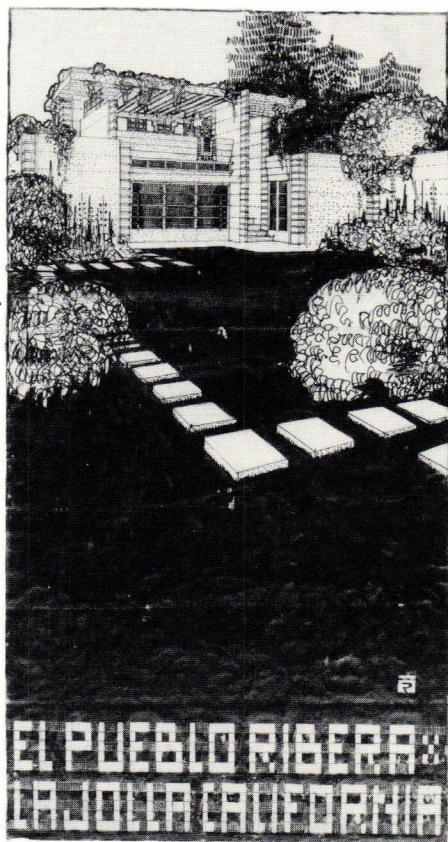
*His home is no more a timid
retreat:*

The earth has become his home.

R. M. Schindler, 1912

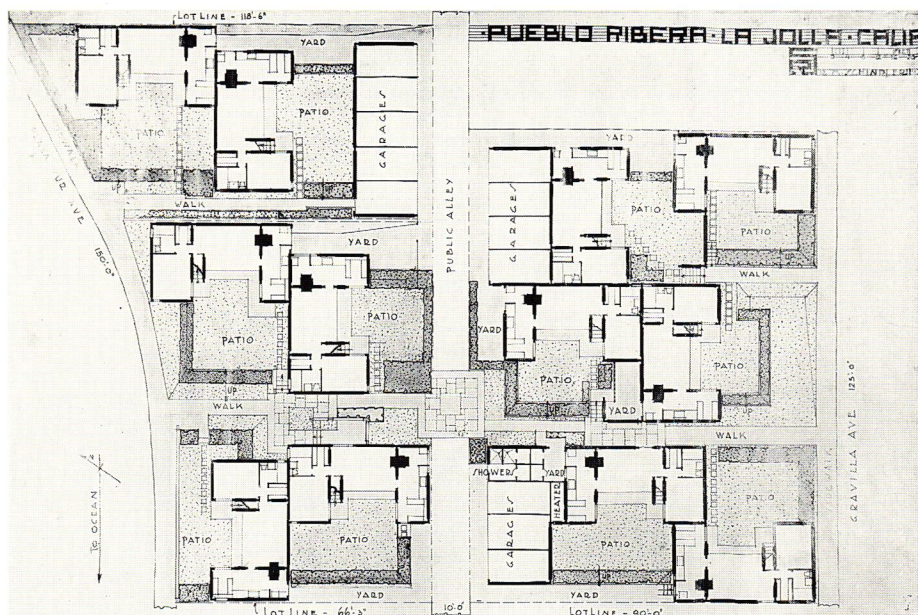
Blessed with clean, temperate breezes and spectacular ocean views, seaside La Jolla is one of the few remaining unspoiled examples of Southern California's gracious coastal environment. As a result, property values have risen continuously, accompanied by a certain settlement pattern in which large scale houses fill the entire lot and open space is restricted to projecting balconies. Juxtaposed to its neighbors, Rudolf M. Schindler's Pueblo Ribera Court appears gentle and unassuming, something left over from a time when humane housing was championed as a fundamental human right. Pueblo Ribera, twelve tiny interlinked courtyard residences, was designed by Schindler between 1923-1925.

As a student of Adolf Loos and of Otto Wagner at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna from 1909-1914, Schindler developed a deep interest in experimentation with new building materials. In keeping with the period's socialist-inspired concentration on workers' housing, he pursued experimentation as a means of achieving more affordable construction methods while simultaneously creating new forms of fluidly interpenetrating yet differenti-



Perspective drawing by R. M. Schindler.
Architectural Drawing Collection, University of
California Art Museum, University of California,
Santa Barbara.

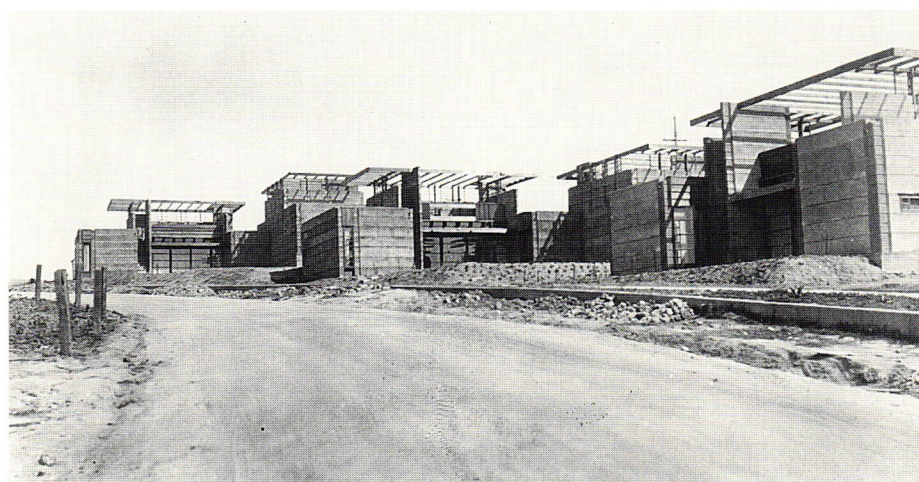
ated spaces free of past stylistic conventions. With a move to the United States in 1914, a stint with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin West from 1918-1923 (where he supervised design and construction of the Freeman and



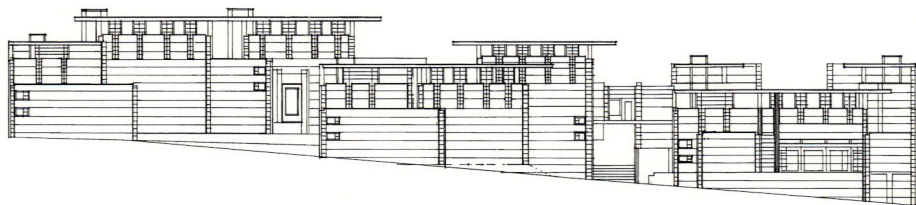
Site plan drawn by R. M. Schindler. Architectural Drawing Collection, University of California Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Barnsdall/Hollyhock Houses) and a move to Los Angeles in 1923, Schindler honed his interests and influences while enlarging their scope to encompass the gentle integration of building to natural site and, as a corollary, the melding of interior and exterior zones through gradual sequences of mediating spaces.

Pueblo Ribera Court is thus the *Cliff Notes* of Schindler's career, summing up his social, spatial, and technological concerns in an untreated redwood and concrete nutshell. The design was commissioned by W. L. Lloyd, a dentist who hoped to profit from the demand for rental units among the



Historic photograph of Pueblo Ribera at completion. Architectural Drawing Collection, University of California Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara.



Pueblo Ribera elevation. Drawing, Jeff Fink.

many visitors flocking to La Jolla in the early 1920s. His desire for original design and economical use of the property dovetailed nicely with Schindler's commitment to site responsive design. This congruence of interest led to one of Schindler's many technological experiments and the development of a courtyard scheme that was to be one of the most innovative designs for multiple family dwellings at the time. Today, Pueblo Ribera provides a case study of lift-form concrete technology as well as of the maximally efficient utilization of a small site without sacrificing substantial open space or three-dimensional complexity in interior space.

Schindler's creation of an "organic whole" harmonious with its seaside environment while simultaneously providing well thought through small units, each with individual character, is achieved through the lay-out of the site in which the individual buildings are configured as two units forming an "L" in plan with the wall of one building enclosing the garden of its neighbor.

The importance of Pueblo Ribera as a successful experiment in the manipulation of minimum space to create the impression of expansiveness, privacy, and pervasive contact with nature is readily apparent even in the briefest of walk-throughs. Entering the wooden garden door off Gravilla Street away from the ocean, one loses sight of the hulking three and four story mansions across the street, and a different world opens. The presence of the ocean some one hundred feet away is suddenly felt much more strongly here in the inti-

mate, semi-private walk between the plant-covered garden walls of the adjacent structures. The courtyard is experienced as the important gathering space at the ground floor level, as one either enters through it or is visually connected to it through the sliding-glass doors of the living room. The courtyard itself possesses a serene, meditative quality that palpably forces one to sit down, enjoy the plants and open sky, and listen to the sounds of the sea.

From the courtyard, stairs lead up to the roof terrace, the other vital open space component of each unit. In keeping with turn-of-the-century Germanic conceptions of *Physokultur* and the importance of healthful air, Schindler intended the roof terraces for use as both daytime living and nighttime outdoor sleeping areas in the summer. From most of the terraces, one is treated to a view of the sea while experiencing the house from a different perspective.

Despite the proximity of neighboring units, planting and orientation maintain privacy as one neither sees nor hears the other residents. This is not to suggest, however, that Pueblo Ribera promotes some kind of anti-social isolation of residents from one another. The sequence of spaces mediating between street and private residential space, semi-private walk (called an "alley" by Schindler in the days before the term automatically implied a host for neighborhood dysfunction) to garden path to individual courtyard entrance, is constantly utilized by residents as a setting for social interaction. This combination of guaranteed privacy and public gather-

ing places is a piece of masterful social engineering, generating harmonious relationships between the various owners and renters.

The modern dwelling will not freeze temporary whims of owner or designer into permanent tiresome features. It will be a quiet, flexible background for a harmonious life.

R. M. Schindler, 1912

The minuteness of the living interior spaces—a bedroom, a small living room, a partial bath, and a kitchen barely large enough to accommodate the opening of a modern refrigerator door—is well compensated for by Schindler's trademark visual continuity of interior to exterior space and by the variation of room heights and placement of window openings, creating an internal complexity without disrupting the structures' exterior horizontality. Upon closer examination, it may be discerned that this complex organiza-

tion is prevented from devolving into busyness by a 4' x 4' modular grid. The desirability of these units to this day, despite dramatically raised expectations of larger kitchens and bathrooms, is proof that Schindler's understanding of how humans utilize space has outlasted technological developments and raises serious questions over whether quality of residential life can be meaningfully measured in square feet.

Pueblo Ribera does not, however, survive unscathed. Many of the problems that plague it to this day emerged shortly after construction. Cool evening and winter breezes led subsequent owners with somewhat less vigorous conceptions of healthful living than Schindler or Mr. Lloyd to enclose parts of the terraces and convert them into master bedrooms. More seriously, Schindler's structural innovations have caused continuous problems. Schindler overcame the owner's misgivings about employing newly developed concrete technologies in place of wood as the structural system, but soon came to



Garden court passageway. Photo, Silja Tillner.

regret his victory. It became apparent upon completion that Pueblo Ribera's concrete mix contained too much sand and too little cement, causing the roofs to leak and numerous cracks to develop in the walls. Today, the concrete's deterioration has produced deep crevices in many of the walls and caused corners of the structures to break free. One unit deteriorated to the point of becoming unleaseable and was briefly occupied by squatters who promptly stripped the building of its redwood components for use as firewood. A recent roof failure led to a hospital stay for the owners.

With upscale neighbors glowering down from their fortresses on the tattered little units and their renters, and criticizing Pueblo Ribera ever more fiercely for its alleged downward pressures on the area's still escalating property values, the last line of defense against speculation on the valuable land Pueblo Ribera occupies is its status as a local historic landmark. Under such circumstances, arson often becomes the last word. On the night of September

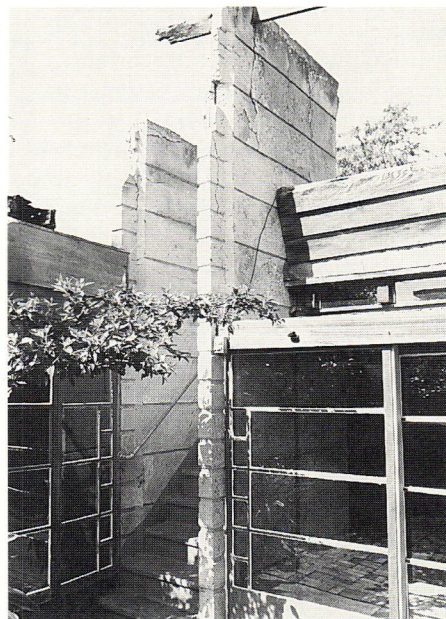


Fire damage. Photo, Silja Tillner.

23, 1991, a fire was set in the garage of one of the rental units. Fortunately, the renter was out that evening, but the unit was destroyed completely and two other units were damaged. Ironically, it was the concrete that saved the other nine buildings and accounted for only partial damage in the other two: in the case of one, the fire was only able to sneak in



Concrete deterioration. Photos, Silja Tillner.





Pueblo Ribera Court. Photo, Silja Tilner.

through an open bathroom window. Had the units been constructed of wood, as Mr. Loyd had originally requested, Pueblo Ribera and its potential as a surviving physical embodiment of historic lessons would have been lost forever.

Following the fire, the current owner hoped for public assistance to properly restore, and thereby let for rent, the historic units. Prominent San Diego architects, dean of the new School of Architecture at UCSD Adele Santos, then local AIA president James Robbins, and members of the historic preservation community all expressed a desire to save the Court. The director of the Modern Art Museum in Vienna Peter Noever was willing to consider Pueblo Ribera as a site for the museum's "artist in residence abroad" project and coventure with UCSD. But the complex multiple ownership of the three damaged units and an asking price triple the property's value as assessed by UCSD diffused these laudable efforts. While the owner restored the units to a rentable condition, the solution is only par-

tial. The long-term fate of the nine units in various states of decay remains unclear. While the current depressed market has no doubt played a major role in the protection of this historic property, so long as the increasingly decrepit exterior appearance of the Court continues to draw the ire of neighbors, Pueblo Ribera remains a sitting duck atop prime real estate.

The soot, fissures, and community approbation, however, do nothing to detract from Schindler's historic design motivated by humanitarian ideals and the special conditions and opportunities of its oceanside site. His concerns for livability and affordability have engendered in his handling of the small Pico Ribera site a prototype for decent, dignified nature-responsive housing produced with modest means. Pueblo Ribera should serve as an inspiration to all architects, particularly those who have made the creation of livable environments for all the center of their creative efforts.

Work on the Water: A Photo Essay on Monterey

Jerry Takigawa

As John Steinbeck wrote in Cannery Row, "Monterey is a city with a long and brilliant literary tradition. It remembers with pleasure and some glory that Robert Louis Stevenson lived there. Treasure Island certainly has the topography and the coastal plan of Point Lobos." But the town also harbors a rich tradition of coastal industry: When Unosuke Higashi immigrated to California around the turn of the century, he settled on the Monterey peninsula and began earning a living by fish-

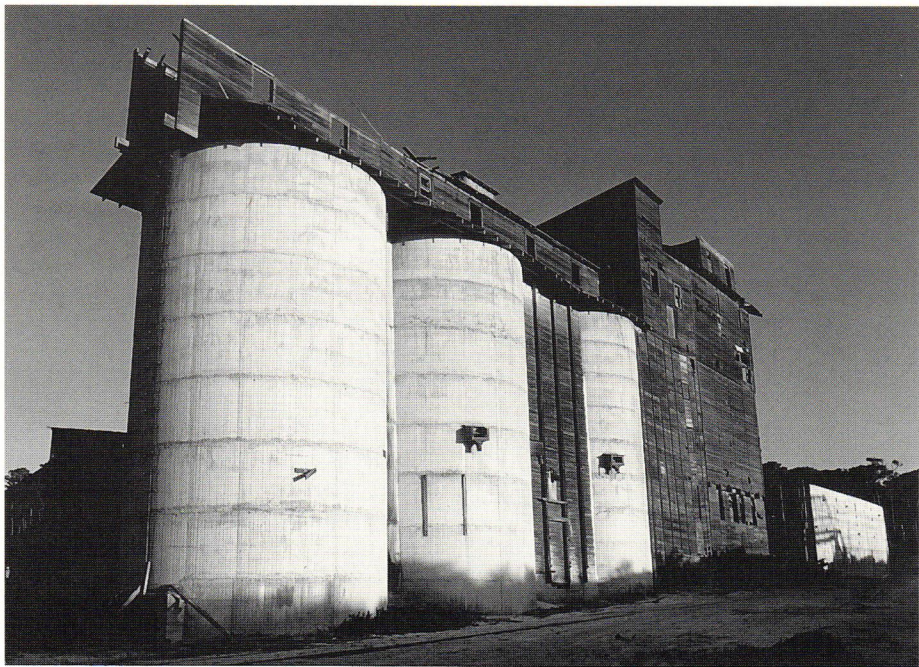
ing in the coastal waters of the bay. With the first crate of fresh fish he offered on the docks to local townspeople, he launched the Higashi Fish Company, the Higashi Hotel, and later, the Azuma Tei restaurant on Franklin Street near the wharves. Higashi built a successful family business rooted in centuries-old traditions of life along the seacoast. These traditions have survived even through the family's internment for nearly two years during World War II. Grandson of this fisherman and entre-



View of the old Hoveden fish cannery on Cannery Row, demolished between 1979 and 1980 when construction was begun on the Monterey Bay Aquarium. Polaroid transfer print.



Above, the defunct sand refining plant on the beach at Asilomar, built around the turn of the century by the Pacific Improvement Company in order to farm the plentiful dunes. Taken over in 1919 by the Del Monte Properties Company (today known as the Pebble Beach Company), the Del Monte Sand Plant was closed in 1972 to make way for the new resort, the Inn at Spanish Bay. Below, massive storage silos stationed on the beach at the site of the old Del Monte sand refinery.





Bird's eye view of Cannery Row today, site of the Monterey Bay Aquarium.



Higashi Fish Company, Monterey, 1932. Photo, Heidrick & Heidrick.

preneur, Jerry Takigawa grew up on the peninsula and continues to live and work there today. As a photographer, he has documented many of the fast-

disappearing architectural relics of the seaside world so brilliantly evoked by Steinbeck in Cannery Row. The now-defunct vernacular buildings and factories where mostly immigrant men and women 'worked' the coastline, from fisheries to sand refineries, are among the subjects on which he has chosen to train his camera. Concluding the prologue to Cannery Row, Steinbeck asked "How can the poem and the stink and the grating noise—the quality of light, the tone, the habit, and the dream—be set down alive?" Takigawa's documentary photographs indeed evoke many of those ephemeral qualities known only from Steinbeck's vivid 'stories'.

Early morning is a time of magic in Cannery Row. In the gray time after the light has come and before the sun has risen, the row seems to hang suspended out of time in a silvery light. The street lights go out, and the weeds are a brilliant green. The corrugated iron of the canneries glows with the pearly luccence of platinum or old pewter. No automobiles are running then. The street is silent of progress and business. And the rush and drag of the waves can be heard as they splash in among the piles of the canneries. It is a time of great peace, a deserted time, a little era of rest.

John Steinbeck, Cannery Row, 1945



Wharf No. 2 at Cannery Row, one of the original working fishermen's wharfs in Monterey.



Above, massive iron armature of the Del Monte sand refinery. Below, forbiddingly-gated entry to the Coast guard pier and breakwater at Cannery Row.



Fish Story

Allan Sekula

I.

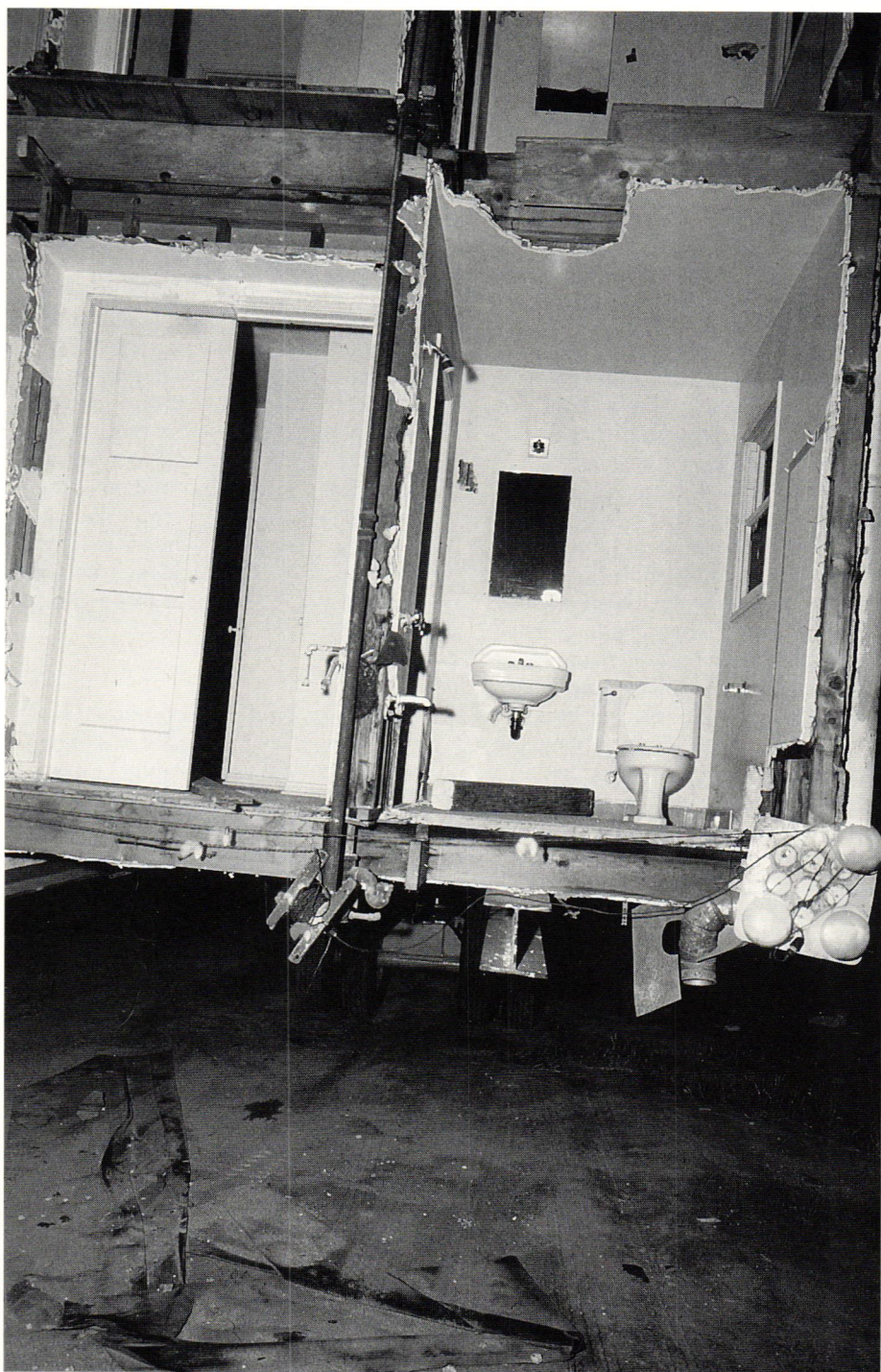
Growing up in a harbor predisposes one to retain quaint ideas about matter and thought. I'm speaking only for myself here, although I suspect that a certain stubborn and pessimistic insistence on the primacy of material forces is part of a common culture of harbor residents. This crude materialism is underwritten by disaster. Ships explode, leak, sink, collide. Accidents happen everyday. Gravity is recognized as a force. By contrast, airline companies encourage the omnipotence of thought. This is the reason why the commissioner has to think very hard, day and night, to keep all the planes in the air.

II.

In the past, harbor residents were deluded by their senses into thinking that a global economy could be seen and heard and smelled. The wealth of nations would slide by in the channel. One learned a biased national physiognomy of vessels: Norwegian ships are neat and Greek ships are grimy. Things are more confused now. A scratchy recording of the Norwegian national anthem blares out from a loudspeaker at the Sailors' Home on the bluff above the channel. The container ship being greeted flies a Bahamian flag of convenience. It was built by Koreans working long hours in the giant shipyards of Ulsan. The underpaid and understaffed crew could be Salvadoran or Filipino. Only the captain hears a familiar melody.



Pipefitters finishing the engine room of a tuna-fishing boat. Campbell shipyard, San Diego harbor, August 1990.



Shipyard worker's housing—built during second World War—being moved from San Pedro to south-central Los Angeles, May 1990. Cibachrome print, 24 x 16 inches.

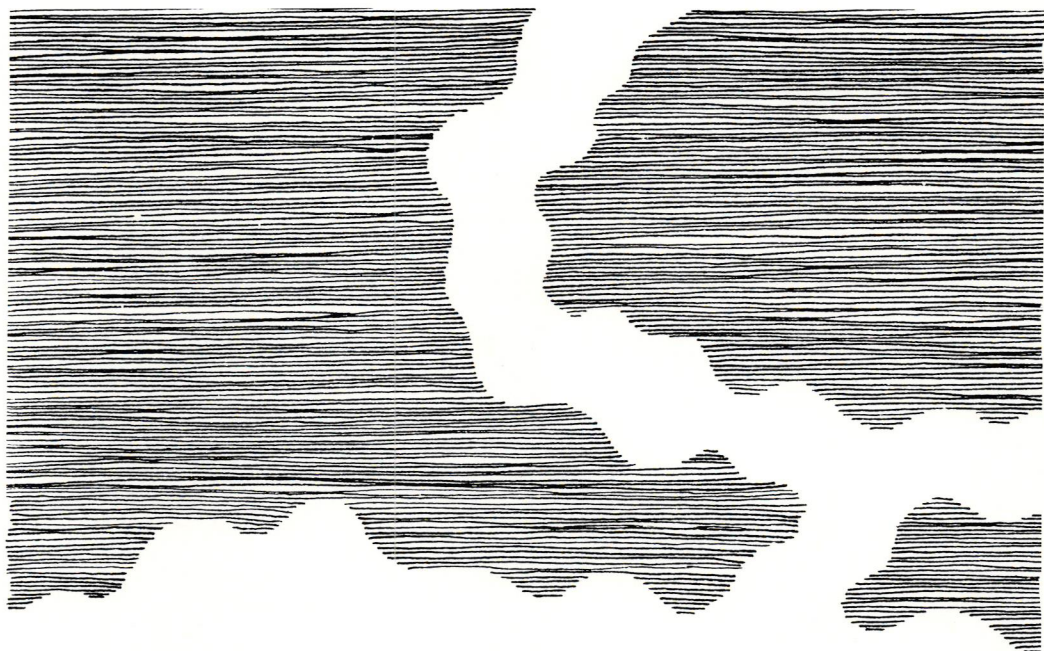
III.

What one sees in a harbor is the concrete movement of goods. This movement can be explained in its totality only through recourse to abstraction. Marx tells us this, even if no one is listening anymore. If the stockmarket is the site in which the abstract character of money rules, the harbor is the site in which material goods appear in bulk, in the very flux of exchange. Use values slide by in the channel; the Ark is no longer a bestiary but an encyclopedia of trade and industry. This is the reason for the antique mercantilist charm of harbors. But the more regularized, literally containerized the movement of goods in harbors, that is, the more rationalized and automated, the more the harbor comes to resemble the stockmarket. A crucial phenomenological point here is the suppression of smell. Goods that once reeked: guano, gypsum, steamed tuna, hemp, molasses, now flow or are boxed. The boxes, viewed in vertical elevation, have the proportions of slightly elongated banknotes. The contents anonymous: electronic components, the worldly belongings of military dependents, cocaine, scrap paper (who could know?) hidden behind the corrugated sheet steel walls emblazoned with the logos of the global shipping corporations: Evergreen, Matson, American President, Mitsui, Hanjin.

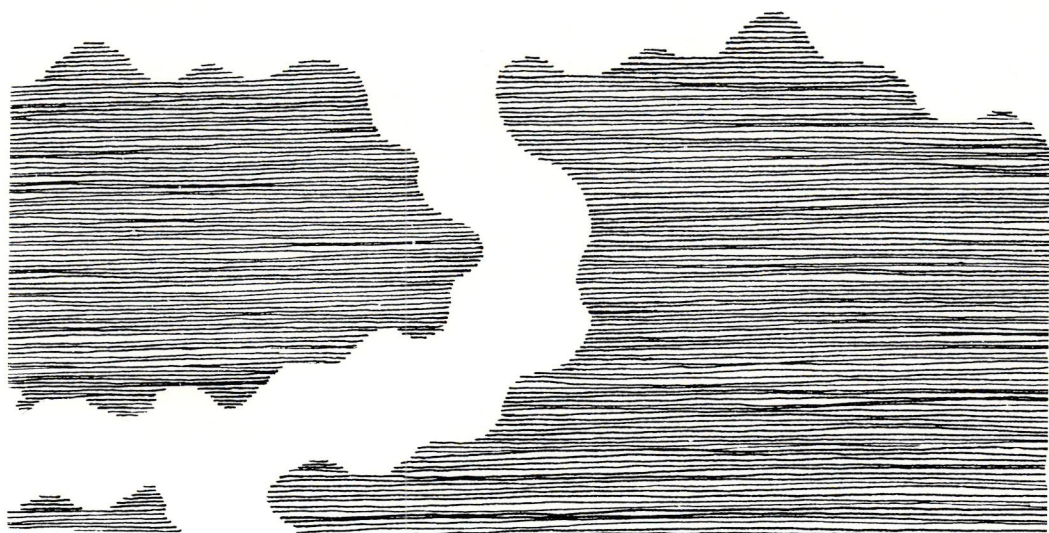
IV.

Space is transformed. The ocean floor is wired for sound. Fishing boats disappear in the Irish Sea, dragged to the bottom by submarines. Businessmen on airplanes read exciting novels about sonar. Waterfront brothels are demolished or remodeled as condominiums. Shipyards are converted into movie sets. Harbors are now less havens (as they were for the Dutch) than accelerated turning-basins for supertankers and container ships. The old harbor front, its links to a common culture shattered by unemployment, is now reclaimed for a bourgeois reverie on the mercantilist past. Heavy metals accumulate in the silt. Busboys fight over scarce spoons in front of a plate glass window overlooking the harbor. The backwater becomes a frontwater. Everyone wants a glimpse of the sea.

"Fish Story," a work in progress, is the third in a cycle of extended documentary works called Geography Lessons. The excerpt published here is taken from a version exhibited in the 1993 Whitney Biennial.



etcetera



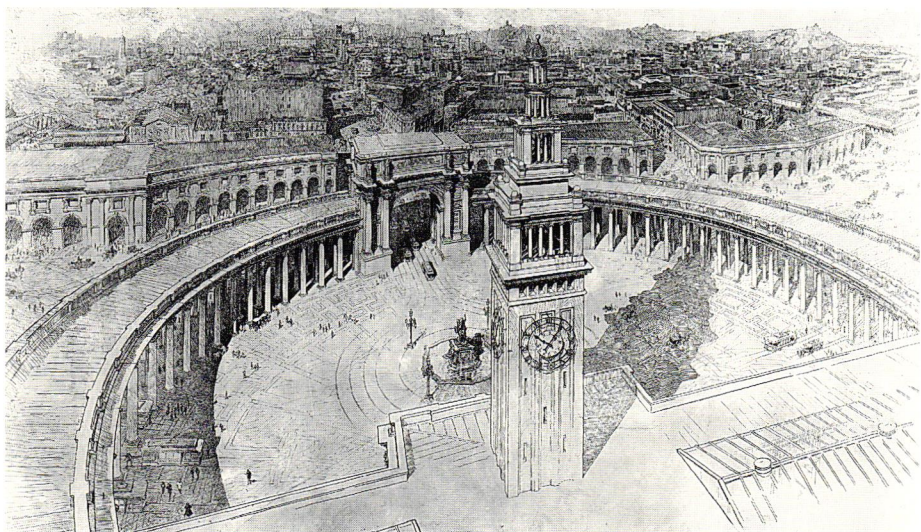
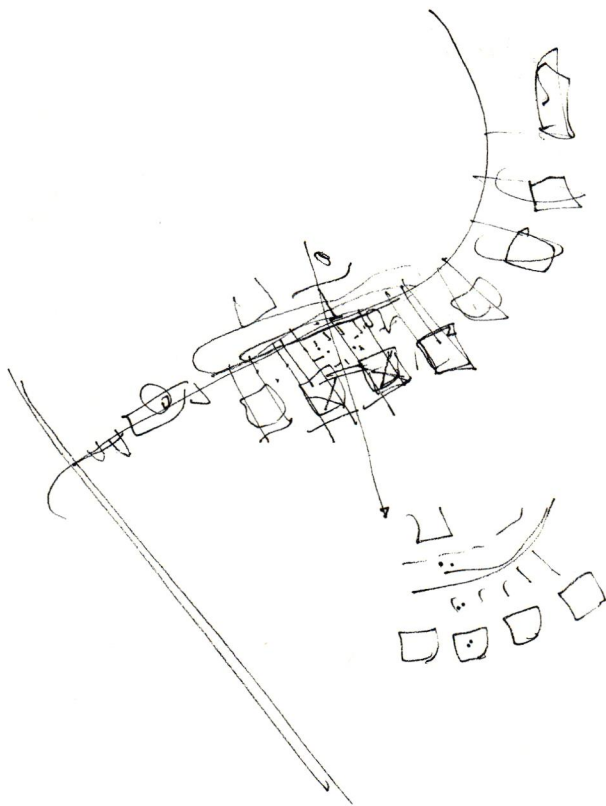
California Sketches



etcetera frontispiece, Jesse Reichek, ink drawing from his book *etcetera* (New York: New Directions, 1965). Insert above, A. Quincy Jones, FAIA, portrait of Allen Siple, FAIA, editor of the *SCAIA Bulletin*, 1959-61. "The *SCAIA Bulletin* has attempted to defend the thesis that *Architects can still draw*—and



that some of the busiest can still take time to whip out a sketch," wrote Siple. Below, Lulah Maria Riggs sketch of the Ojai Hotel, designed by George Washington Smith, 1924, from David Gebhard, *Lulah Maria Riggs* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1992). Architectural Drawing Collection, UC Santa Barbara.



Above, William Turnbull, FAIA, *Thoughts on The Embarcadero*, ink on dinner program, CCAIA Installation and Awards Presentation, 1992. Below, Willis Polk, *Proposed Peristyle and Arch at Foot of Market Street, San Francisco*, tower in foreground by A. Page Brown, 1897. Documents Collection, Environmental Design Library, University of California, Berkeley.

From Catechism to Calisthenics: *Cliff Notes* on the History of the American Campus

Kurt W. Forster

When we look into history, we think that we raise our binoculars and draw nearer to view things that are far removed from the present. In fact, we may be gazing less into the depth of time than exploring the uneven surface of a mirror: Instead of peering into unobstructed depth, historians are vexed by shifting and distorted shapes floating on the mirror's surface, shapes so close to view that we have difficulty recognizing what it is we are looking at. This peculiar vexation, which is inherent in the study of the past, works all the more powerfully when we are intent upon finding something in the past that promises to be of particular interest and utility to us today.

We investigate the history of American campus planning and building because we hope to glean from the exercise those elements that make up the framework of the campus as an *institution*. Lasting institutions like colleges and universities invoke a social rationale for their physical installations, a rationale that speaks to their overarching purposes and helps elucidate the ideas behind their operations. In our culture, we are *educated* to find in our surroundings the manifestations of character and purpose, particularly when those larger abstractions such as character, purpose, and meaning would tend to escape our immediate grasp.

While we may never fully comprehend the nature of a private corporation, for example, we discover something about it as soon as we have occa-

sion to apply for its services. Likewise, as private citizens we may never penetrate the complex operations of governmental agencies. However, the mere appearance of the Federal Building in Westwood, for example, serves as sufficient warning: Indistinguishable from run-of-the-mill office buildings of its time, except, perhaps, for the absence of corporate logos, the Federal Building might be said to resemble any other of its kind. Yet its bureaucratic facelessness has congealed in mute facades that lend it an air of *weirdness*, even of irreconcilable *alienness* from any element of its surroundings. In a building where one is hardly able to find the entrance, once inside, the question is, would one ever find the way out? Most people know the location of the Federal Building in Los Angeles only because the lawns and curbsides that surround it are frequently the site of public demonstrations and protests staged to arrest the attention of motorists traveling along congested Wilshire Boulevard.

A CLEARING IN THE WILDERNESS— A HAVEN IN THE CITY

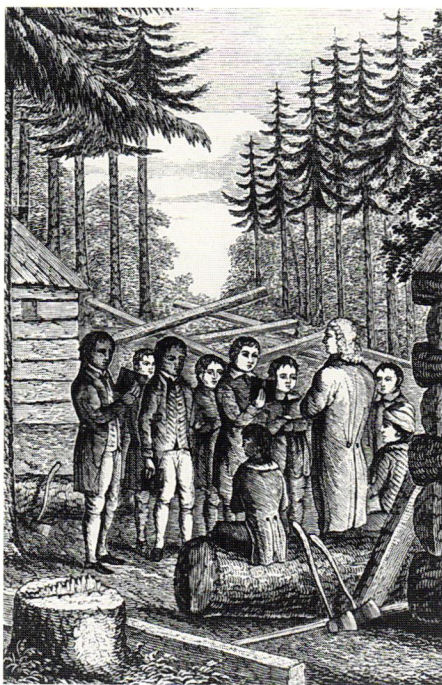
When we look into the history of the architecture found on American campuses, we are also inquiring into educational goals and ideals as they have been defined at different moments in the evolution of colleges and universities in this country. Education in its institutionalized form as college education is al-

ways Janus-faced, at once looking inward and outward: On the one hand, the members of its special community of learning comprise students who are largely removed from the life and work of ordinary citizens. Students and teachers constitute a community apart, single-mindedly dedicated to a unifying purpose. Having been set apart as such, this community is perforce *re-embedded* into a larger context, wherein it partakes inescapably of the cultural practices of society at large. This duality at the heart of college and university life was recognized very early and correspondingly articulated in designs for campuses. It remains an issue at many colleges which find themselves squarely in the midst of urban blight or quite simply in areas where other segments of society have already staked out their 'turf'. In less than a quarter century, the Yale University campus has transformed itself from an accessible place, with a distinctly 'civic' presence in the town of New Haven, into a security-gated, patrolled, and virtually 'fortified' precinct whose occupants no doubt harbor deeply divided feelings as they traverse derelict streets lined with half-abandoned shopfronts in order to reach classrooms and administration buildings.

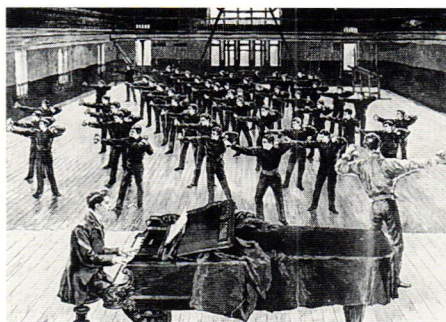
Educational policies always negotiate the conflict between absorption and participation: If the founders of early colleges went out into the wilderness to build their campuses, they may have done so to satisfy a desire for seclusion and almost monastic isolation. However, one must keep in mind that this pattern was very much in keeping with the American settler's expanding compass and gradual advance across the continent, and that the virtues of self-reliance and self-sufficiency were as indispensable to life on the new continent as they were to college education. Nearly two centuries ago, the president of Union College in upstate New York described the campus community as

"separated from the great world," yet intent on cultivating "the decorum, ceremony, and politeness of refined domestic life."

As self-contained as the arena of education may have been, its chief purpose was to provide the atrium to a social life of "politeness" and "refined" domesticity, and as such, it possessed far larger and more enduring meaning than the few short years of college would suggest for the entire lifetime of a student. Despite their frequently isolated locations, colleges strongly hinted at the values education promised for life 'at large', and they did so not least by the character of their buildings, which have often become *emblems* that long outlasted their physical durability as architecture.



The founding of Dartmouth College, 1769, engraving by S. E. Brown, 1839. Chartered by the province of New Hampshire, Dartmouth was founded in the woods at Hanover by Reverend Eleazer Wheelock, who was charged with the task of educating and integrating Indian and white settler students.



Interior view of the Pratt Gymnasium at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts (built in 1884).

A woodcut of 1839 shows the students of Dartmouth College in a clearing, attending at once to the cultivation of their minds and the virgin land. This pioneering moment when native Indians and whites were represented together—already decanting an ideal from social turmoil—soon yielded to sharp segregation in all spheres of education. This segregation at once mirrored the conditions of society at large and favored finer distinctions of class and culture. In 1885, *Harper's Weekly* published a woodcut of another educational ideal altogether, one realized at Amherst College where male students exercised to music beaten out on a piano (by, or so it appears—and quite appropriately under circumstances of increasing separation of 'sporty' from 'sissy' activities—a female pianist). We would underrate the modest athletic gains derived from such calisthenics were we to overlook the fact that they proved to be as useful in the ballrooms of New York and Boston as they were in the gymnasiums of colleges.

With the rise of urban centers and metropolitan culture, the great public universities entered a new era, drawing countless aspiring immigrants and rivaling—in some instances even leading—the advance of scientific research beyond the bounds of college education. Their urban sites—or locations within the ambit of cities—posed problems very different from those of college campuses located in predominantly rural areas. In

its grand urban scale and vistas, the plan for the University of Minnesota by Cass Gilbert dating from 1908-10 invites comparison with the urban projects of the City Beautiful movement. But it also points to metropolitan projects such as those developed by Viennese architect Otto Wagner at the very same time for new districts of the Austro-Hungarian capital. Despite its international air, the Minneapolis campus harks back to a distinctly American model. Within its urban framework, the design reveals the imprint of Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia at Charlottesville of 1817-26, where the library is situated at the head of a generously proportioned central area flanked by parallel blocks of buildings. In the sense that it delineates a grand hierarchy, the plan also displays a certain anonymity and monotony in the form of its buildings—unavoidably reflecting familiar metropolitan conditions, where masses come into play and visual orientation requires extended vistas framed by similar but also contrasting facades.

The fusion of metropolitan anonymity (reflected in the rise of mass education) with the hallmarks of a special cultural precinct (formerly reserved for civic and religious institutions) was accomplished in such grand campus plans as those for Columbia University in New York, the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, the University of California at Berkeley, or the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. However diverse their sites and cultural geographies may be, all of these campuses constitute an essentially urban setting whose virtues seem perennially more alive within them than without, that is, they remain more vibrant on campus grounds than in most American cities today. Cass Gilbert's eloquent views conjure the atmosphere of imposing governmental institutions whose dignity results from a particular blend of architectural parsimony and grandiloquence.



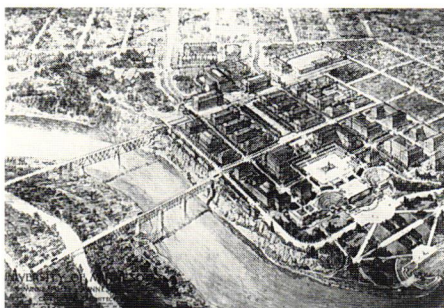
Cass Gilbert's presentation drawing of buildings for the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, 1910.

In effect, this mixture is no more contradictory than the simultaneous presence of horse-drawn carriages and motorcars along the major avenue leading straight through university grounds in Gilbert's presentation drawing.

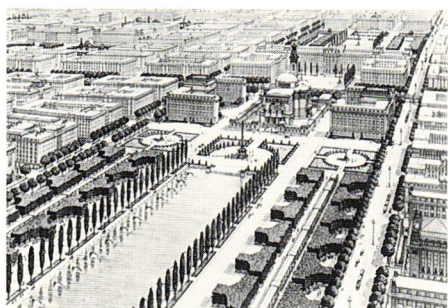
THE ACADEMICAL VILLAGE AND THE CITY OF LEARNING

With his 1792 plan for the expansion of the Yale campus at New Haven, John Trumbull added a library building to the existing chapel, and proposed two new dormitory buildings, each unit with "a large common parlor and two bedrooms, serving as studies also." This proposal embraced a "living condition" considered ideal, and proved to be highly influential for future college

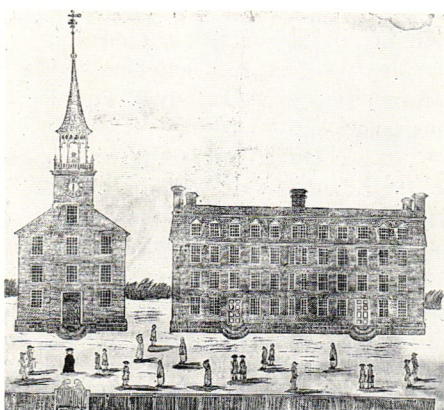
design—although Trumbull recommended it chiefly on practical grounds as "more pleasant and agreeable to the scholars at all seasons." It was clearly as much an educational ideal as a planning scheme, and the social implication of such an 'incubator' was the nurturing of lasting bonds among 'Yalies'. Trumbull praised the "elegance" and "uniformity" that would result from adoption of his scheme, which he claimed "would unite utility with ornament,...would admit of being pursued gradually, and whether partially or completely executed, would be in all its stages handsome." Herein lies what must be one of the true concerns of any campus master plan: Not only should the intended result possess certain qualities in and of itself, but the long, halting, and sometimes even unattainable realization



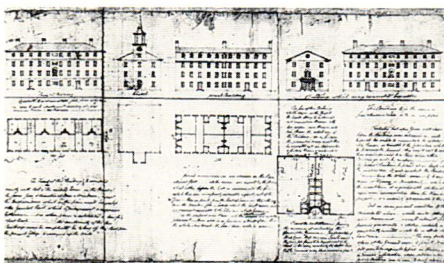
Cass Gilbert's master plan for the campus of the University of Minnesota at Minneapolis, 1910.



Otto Wagner's design for the central area of the XXII district of Vienna, 1910.



Woodcut showing the two original buildings comprising the Yale campus in 1786: the chapel and Connecticut Hall.



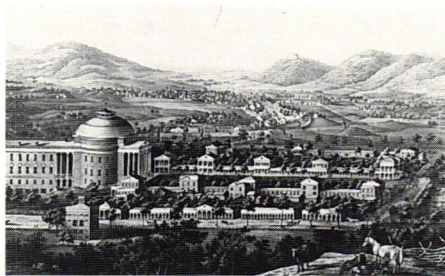
John Trumbull's master plan for the expansion of Yale, 1792.

should be calculated and the consequences accommodated from the outset.

Thomas Jefferson brought a lifelong passion for architecture to the task of planning the campus of Central College (begun in 1817), which would later become the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. Already during his presidency (1801-1809) Jefferson was widely consulted about the design of buildings for institutions of higher learning. He formulated the "general idea of an academical village" possessed of an architectural framework that permits both hierarchic difference and sameness: "Much observation and reflection on these institutions have long convinced me that the large and crowded buildings in which youths are pent up are equally unfriendly to health, to study, to manners, morals, and order." He advocated "a separate lodge for each professor-

ship, with only a hall below for his class...," and "joining these lodges by barracks for a certain portion of the students, opening into a covered way to give a dry communication between all schools. The whole of these arranged around an open square of grass and trees, would make it, what it should be in fact, an academical village..."

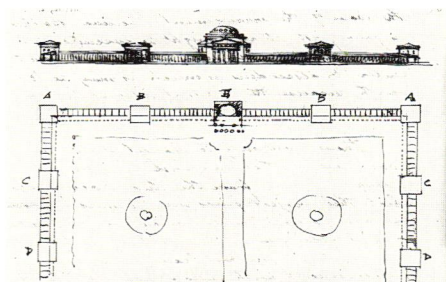
Jefferson seemed at first content to employ an alternating series of academic pavilions and student rooms based on the concept of the row. It was Benjamin Henry Latrobe who, in a letter of 1817, proposed to Jefferson the "centering" addition of a rotunda for auditoria. The rotunda would become a grand focal point, with symmetrical wings expanding from the center so as to form a large quadrangle. Before his death in 1826, Jefferson saw his plan executed to a large extent, but in a form heavily modified by site conditions and other constraints. In the final analysis, the built campus is perhaps more coherent and serviceable than that which was originally envisaged: "It forms in fact a regular town, capable of being enlarged to any extent which future circumstances may call for." With these words Jefferson voices again that universalist ambition of rendering everything commensurate with everything else, just as his *Land Ordinance* of 1785 formulated a principle of regularity that was intended to facilitate expansion by unlimited repetition of geographical units.



Bird's eye view from the west of Jefferson's campus of the University of Virginia in a lithograph by F. Sachse and Co., 1856.



View of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville showing the roof parapets and flat-roofed colonnades as Jefferson designed them, engraving by B. Tanner, 1827.



AA, will be the best appearing pavilion, because the tower
 story will be covered by the Rotunda roof. (Jefferson
 will also be a study room) and might be built first. BB
 pavilions having the same dimensions, to general effect
 but exhibiting different styles or orders of architecture.
 CC, DD, EE, FF, Center building which ought
 to exhibit in itself as perfect a specimen of
 architectural taste as can be devised. It should propose
 (as a temple or a house for lectures or lectures).

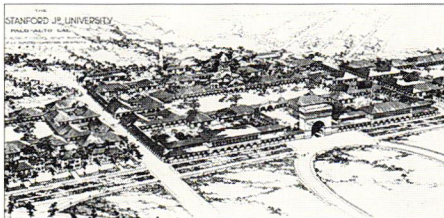
From an illustrated letter addressed to Thomas Jefferson by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 24 July 1817.

Yet another striking feature surfaced in this exchange of ideas between Latrobe and Jefferson: Jefferson proposed to design individual pavilions with “a variety of appearance, not two alike, so to serve as specimens for the Architecture lecture,” and thus invoked the familiar concept of *varietas* within a larger unity. In his plan, this quality ceases to be an abstraction and is instead made manifest through architecture. Informing the campus itself by means of exemplary manifestations, education will make of the buildings examples of utility and objects that catalyze immediate experience. This recognition of the mutual importance of uniqueness and sameness, of individual

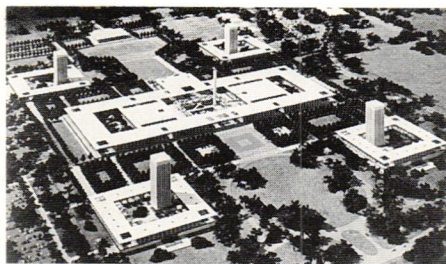
identity and democratic conformity, resided at the heart of Jefferson’s social and political as well as architectural imagination.

It is characteristic of the early years of the Republic that Jefferson’s educational goal was not chiefly identified with the good of the individual, but was rather undergirded by a common purpose and mutual sustenance. For this reason, the rotunda was never intended as the residence of college presidents, but was instead destined to house the tools most essential to the creation and handing on of common ideals and mutual bonds. In the new nation, the library is the successor to the chapel, and the pinnacle of the new institution is the medium of its mission, the *book*.

As planning principles transformed the campus into a model community meant to match the qualities of the new states and territories, a certain regressive element also began to manifest itself, especially at private and religious institutions. At Stanford University and elsewhere, the campus plan sought to unseat the library from its crowning status and instead restore the chapel to a central position. In contrast to its rural site and tranquil isolation at the time of its foundation, the Stanford plan enforces an almost medieval ideal of community. Closely-knit, arcaded buildings project a hierarchical order, not only of community life but also of common knowledge, while their Richardsonian garb lends more than a hint of recent Bostonian dignity.



Design for the master plan of Stanford University, Frederick Law Olmstead and Charles A. Coolidge, 1888.



Edward Durell Stone's model of the master plan for SUNY, Albany, 1961.

'GRAND PLAN' AND 'COLLEGE LAND' IN CONSTANT REPAIR

Just as Jefferson's master plan for the articulation of regularly-designed towns and cities all across the continent has been proven to have its negative implications, there are dangers inherent in the idea of a 'grand' campus plan. One of these is virtually advertised in Edward Durell Stone's master plan for SUNY Albany of 1961. The over-standardization of its elements—a tendency that recurs throughout Stone's work, be it for a city hall, a corporate headquarters, or an exhibition building—and its starkly abstract geometric patterning impose a mindless symmetry. Scaleless elements such as arcades, for example, become totally dysfunctional when they are three stories high and three hundred yards long. The general layout might be fit for a military academy, but it surely lacks those enduring virtues of *varietas*



Charles Colbert's design for a new town included this high-rise tower of learning.

and focus. Each segment mechanically reproduces its symmetrically corresponding counterpart, resulting in the 'corporate campus' or the *high-rise university*. One may well wonder why the trustees and presidents of so many universities were in such a rush to add this brand of commercial architecture, often of especially crass kind, to their vaunted sites of learning, and why some architectural firms (John C. Warnecke, after Durell Stone, in the case of Stanford University) managed to monopolize commissions at one or another college. The example of Stanford University is discouraging not only for the particularly low (in fact, cut-rate commercial) grade of its recent buildings but also for the inconsequence of its architectural beginnings, whose influence on the choices of succeeding generations appears to amount to nothing at all.

Then there is that familiar malady of 'picturesque tokenism'. In its more recent practice, the picturesque tends to

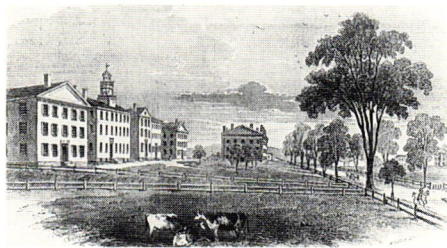


John Galen Howard's pen and watercolor study for Sather Tower, UC Berkeley, c. 1911-12.

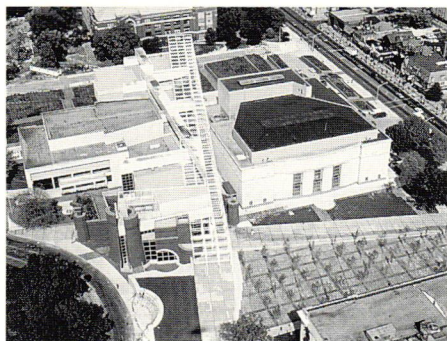
reduce everything to the production of *effects*, *exhibits*, and *surrogates*. The ubiquitous *campanile*, for example, has been deployed as a picturesque element on many campuses across the country. Originally intended as a distinctive civic marker—by which an entire city-state such as Florence or Siena was once symbolically represented—the campanile is precisely *not* ecclesiastical. Instead, it enjoyed particular popularity in America during the first quarter of this century as a secular element. Campus planners have just as often turned to the evocation of faraway and exotic lands as well as other times (choosing carefully from among a few favorite periods), so as to simulate a ‘visit’ to one or another culture, whether it be republican Venice, medieval England, the France of Louis XIV, or the Germany of Bismarck. Unperturbed by the latent powers of historical associations, campus builders betrayed a distinct preference for pre-modern or decidedly na-

tionalistic vocabularies. This may signal either an enlightened rejection of the implied power of such associations, or an unenlightened predilection for pre-democratic values. Whatever the case may have been, only the generalized abstractions of mature Beaux-Arts design went significantly beyond historicist clichés (based, as they were, more or less selectively on specific English, Spanish, French, or German models), and reached (for example in the best work of Paul Cret or Albert Kahn) a kind of subliminal modernity.

The transformation of the American campus from the academic village to the city of learning was not just a result of growth and modernization. It also implies a profound shift in educational goals. The former ideal of self-sufficiency yields to the new ones of connectedness, interdependency, and specialization. The move from pioneer village to the metropolis carries with it a complete transformation of society and suggests of itself many revisions of educational practice. If a clearing in the forest was the appropriate backdrop for Dartmouth in the eighteenth century, an urban motorway and the smoke-filled sky of the metropolis framed the setting for the University of Minneapolis in the early years of the twentieth century. If the small band of students with their books at the ready built log cabins in the wilderness and prepared themselves for a life not that much different from their campus experiences, if this band of students exemplifies the colonial conditions, then today’s poly-cultural, poly-glot, composite student body prepares itself for another life, indeed for *other lives*: lives that follow a great variety of paths, contingencies, and possibilities as they negotiate among, through, and even against traditional institutions. To build a campus for a community of great diversity—of race, age, and cultural practices—is to open the door to *buildings that reflect their intermediate*



View of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, c. 1850.



Peter D. Eisenman’s Wexner Center on the campus of the University of Ohio at Columbus, 1990.

or *ephemeral role* rather than to insist upon permanence under circumstances of rapidly shifting goals and means.

An example of a campus building that vividly reacts to these conditions is the Wexner Center at Ohio State University in Columbus, designed by Peter D. Eisenman in 1982-83. Built in the interstices of the existing campus, yet powerfully altering its complexion, this is a building mostly unseen yet clamorously present; a building seemingly arising out of nowhere, yet symbolically resurrecting a lost chapter from the history of the university; a building made mostly of transitions yet exercising a powerful pull on its surroundings. While the Wexner Center may at first appear to be a mere scaffolding, the experience it affords students is one of infinite possibilities.

A temporary library building for the campus of the University of California at Los Angeles offers an example of a very different kind. At the heart of its strategy lies an affinity with structures of much greater ambition and expense. Calculatedly inscribed into a context from which it also takes its distance, this ephemeral structure does not violate the campus site it occupies, but rather installs itself in the fashion of a favored visitor whose seasonal departure creates at once a sense of absence. While it is eminently light in its tread, it nonetheless lastingly alters the nature of the site: Hodgetts+Fung's Towell Library at UCLA takes the occasional appearance of high-tech structures on campuses—most often given over to gymnasias or labs—a step further by installing not just a bird of passage but a permanent *volière*. Their building suggests, however, that in a phase of profound cultural transformations and increasing financial strain, the design of campus buildings might well engage, rather than obstruct, these forces of change. Instead of opting for a cut-rate version of corporate design now that the favored



Hodgetts+Fung's Towell Library, UCLA, 1992.

architects of 1980s mega-design like Kohn Pederson Fox, Pelli, Graves, and others are jostling for ever-smaller jobs, universities—especially public ones—ought to engage in exactly the same efforts that have been diagnosed for business in general: Unorthodox experimentation along imaginative instead of schematic patterns of thinking, individualized rather than corporate goals, and above all an engagement with playful, even puzzling, subcurrents instead of globalized and sterile imagery.

With his design for the Wexner Center, Eisenman plumbed the unevenly layered surfaces of the university's past only to project them back from the depths of time—and thus make them manifest in the experience of the present. A generation ago, Yale collected a set of monumental examples—ranging from Saarinen's Ingalls Hockey Rink to the starkly isolated buildings by Gordon Bunshaft/SOM, Paul Rudolph, and Philip Johnson—whose mere appearance is intended to simulate the material permanence of centuries-old values. Today, lightly penned interventions such as those of Robert Venturi in a genre of architectural *vignettes* and, most of all, the improvisational, actively transformational ones by Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, and by younger architects of heteroclite interests, are just what the doctor ordered.

Letters

LOS ANGELES SPRING 1993

To the Editor,

The inherent message contained in the document prepared by the Bloods and Crips (*Architecture California* November 1992) is, once again, that the African American community must play a fundamental role in shaping both physical and social change in South Central Los Angeles. The apparent failure to date of the public sector to identify and marshal the resources required to implement such change has left those persons who live and work in South Central skeptical and apathetic toward the rhetoric of assistance. At the same time, the concepts of self-determination and empowerment are running at an all-time high within the black community.

It is my belief that a great effort should be made to identify existing successful models for community-based development, and that such models should be presented in formats that allow for operative methodologies to be emulated, right down to a grass-roots level. Projects such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Redevelopment Program, executed under the visionary leadership of Gus Newport in Boston, Massachusetts, can provide us with the tools and inspiration to move ahead with the challenges of rebuilding our city.

The Los Angeles Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) has historically worked with our communities to help provide sensitive and considerate responses to design issues, where impor-



Jeffrey, *Eye on LA: Normandie Avenue and Florence Boulevard, May 1, 1992*. This and the following three photographs are currently on exhibition at the California Afro-American Museum at Exposition Park in Los Angeles and are published in Roland Charles and Toyomi Igus, eds. *Life in a Day of Black LA: The Way We See It* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles/The Regents of the University of California, 1992).



Akili-Casundria Ramses, *A storefront minister who counsels homeless on Central Avenue.*

tant aspects of our culture might otherwise be overlooked. LANOMA has formed a non-profit economic development corporation called the NOMAD Group. We are joining with other community-based organizations to focus on the production of projects that neighborhoods consider most needed.

NOMA is currently involved in bringing together many of the great African American minds in Los Angeles, as well as from around the country, in the fields of architecture, planning, urban design, and social and economic sciences, to convene a summit, the purpose of which will be to chart a course for empowerment and self-determination of our community.

R. Steven Lewis, Western Regional
Vice President, NOMA

Dear Editor,

After the civil unrest last year there was a significant outpouring of concern and activism on the part of design professionals. While this response is impressive, it is important to contextualize the role of design and design professionals in addressing the problems of Los Angeles in 1993.

We often describe the problems of the inner city—poverty, inequality, oppression—in design terms of “urban blight,” a lack of affordable housing, or poor planning. Of course there are such problems, but they are the outward

manifestations of more fundamental larger social structures and processes. By most counts, the city has not made any real progress in ameliorating the social conditions that contributed to the uprising, including racism, corporate-dominated politics, and uneven development associated with free-market capitalism. These inequalities are exacerbated by the larger forces of growing internationalization, as U.S. cities are increasingly competing with Mexico and Canada for capital. In many ways, local power and control is being usurped, resulting in a more limited terrain in which to create change. Nevertheless, there is still the need and opportunity for people to make a difference.

What does this mean for planners and architects? It means recognizing the limits of architecture. On the one hand, architecture provides the essential environment for human activity. Moreover, community-driven design creates an extremely empowering experience that can, in fact, change communities. This is critical, because in many oppressed communities people have indeed lost hope and are acutely aware of the lack of power they have over their lives. On the other hand, design itself has a very limited ability to address problems of uneven development, spatially concentrated disinvestment, capital flight, and both the fiscal and legitimacy crises of the state.



Nathaniel Bellamy, *Owner of a newstand at First and San Pedro.*

Related to this is the elaboration of professional identities in our society. Increasingly, we do not view ourselves as part of the human race or even as Angelenos, but rather as architects, engineers, nurses. Thus, much of the outpouring of concern and action is structured along professional lines. However, this may not always be the most effective way to create societal change.

Design professionals should continue to offer such services, especially those who incorporate community participation, but we need to become more encompassing in our goals. We must ask ourselves, to what extent do our activities contribute to the redistribution of wealth and power necessary to alter the causes of urban crisis? Do our actions challenge an economic system that fosters corporate irresponsibility and greed? What are we doing to promote deeper forms of democracy and respect for human rights? Finally, how are we each dealing with the racism that underlies urban conflict?

I would like to suggest that we respond to the situation in LA by participating not as architects and planners, but as protesters or envelop-stuffers, thereby looking at ourselves differently—not just as “professionals” but as members of a community contributing to building a larger social movement.

Laura Pulido
Department of Geography
California State University, Fullerton

Dear Editor,

The Rodney King beating and subsequent trial brought into focus the disparity that still remains in our society. The uprising and devastation that followed forced us to look at our own roles in both the underlying problems and possible solutions. There has been pressure for architects to play a significant role, as many fingers point to the physical environment as a central issue

(“Blood/Crips Program,” *Architecture California* November 1992).

Frustrations rose as the AIA ‘core’ reacted as it would to a natural disaster, and the Urban Innovations Group (UCLA) proposed to redesign Los Angeles. Many such responses reflected a traditional ‘top-down’ process and addressed neither the diversity nor the potential of the affected and neglected areas of Los Angeles County.

Beginning in May 1992, many in the Los Angeles design community gathered together to discuss our part in the city’s recovery. One year later we are continuing as the Design Professionals’ Coalition—a non-profit effort by architects, engineers, planners, and designers, individuals and related organizations—with the sole purpose of providing pro-bono and reduced fee design services, reflecting the needs, desires, and diversity of those we serve.

Coalition activities have ranged from physical clean-up of a homeless family shelter in downtown Los Angeles to developing a restoration program for an artists’ community in Midtown. The long range focus of the group is to advocate for, and assist in, the creation of community-based Neighborhood Plans. These plans (coordinated by community organizations and non-profit developers) will be developed through a grassroots, participatory process, and will be incorporated into ‘official’ general and specific plans.

The challenge for design professionals is to seek, listen, and understand issues and proposals *from* communities (i.e., *people*). This means rejecting a traditional role of dictating *to* communities and accepting a role as interpreters. The next step is to take the sensitivity beyond our volunteer projects and incorporate it into our work for fees and even to get involved in *our own* neighborhoods.

Michaela Pride-Wells, AIA, President
Design Professionals Coalition



Roland Charles, *Signs of the times.*

To the Editor,

The only building happening in South Central LA in the last year is being done by the groups in the community that were already working before "Rebuild LA." Many groups and speakers have been out there saying what they are "going to do." There is no money; there aren't even the vans that were promised by RLA.

Many neighborhood groups that have become non-profit developers have learned already from past experiences with agencies like the CRA about the importance of independence and maintaining control over our own projects. Through referrals within the community we have found architects like Chris Jones who are willing to design for the special needs of residents. Support for existing community-based initiatives such as ours should be easy. RLA is way behind the times!

Charlotte Bullock
Concerned Citizens of
South Central Los Angeles

LONGING FOR PLACE

Dear Editor,

It has become a real pleasure to receive *Architecture California*. I actually read it—you've created a lively, thoughtful, and necessary journal about architecture: Amazing! In the last issue, J. B. Jackson's article about place and time especially interested me. In response, I offer the enclosed piece.

Murray Silverstein, AIA
Jacobson, Silverstein, Winslow, Berkeley

Ed. Note: Silverstein's article, "Is Place a Journey?" Timber Framing 24, June 1992, takes up Jackson's theme with a twist: He finds in our American ambivalence toward place some interesting implications for design. Here is an excerpt:

For architects like me, schooled in the sixties and seventies anti-modernist, place-making tradition, the idea of *place* existed fundamentally as a wish—a wished-for fit between ourselves and some piece of the physical world. Reality, it turns out, is a different kind of place—a place that includes our wish, but is larger, more spacious. There is the longing for place and there is the place within which this longing is experienced.

Our idea of place, in effect, was a structuring absence. It was experienced as something missing, which by good work we hoped to restore. And vernacular architecture was our clue that this missing harmony between self and world once existed and could do so again. The bother is, of course, that we experience vernacular environments as *outsiders* looking in. We are not natives. For better or worse, as adult residents of the industrialized world, we are, in varying degrees, only tourists of the vernacular. It is as tourists that we admire "the real thing," feel its lack in our own lives, long to have it again....

What we miss in our romance with place is this: deep inside our conception



Johnson Wildkey B.
12/91

Johnson House, JSW Architects. Sketch, Murray Silverstein.

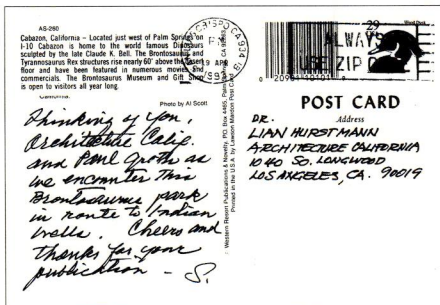
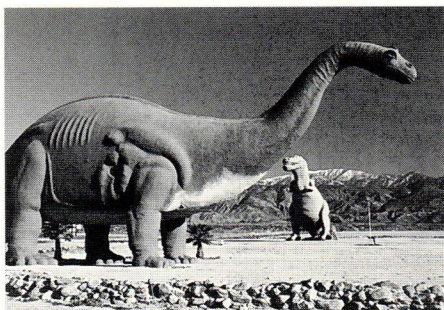
of the very nature of place, along with its obvious pleasures, is the desire to leave it....The first place, embryo-in-womb, is destroyed by the push of birth; and a whole series of next-best-places are, in turn, destroyed by the push for exploration and separation. The place left behind may be left standing, but with each leave-taking a fundamental harmonic between self and place is experienced as broken, never *quite* to be regained. This experience, which we all share developmentally, reaches an historical watershed with Western-style democracies' stress upon domains of individual freedom as against the stabilities of place. And once introduced into the world as an historical force, the heady taste of free space is hard to ignore....

Americans have a particularly restless relationship with place. By and large it's a tale of journeys....The early Modernist architects grasped this restless energy very clearly, and tried to work with it. Their strongest buildings sought to destroy conventional European images of place altogether....It's easy to criticize Modernism. Its failures are legion, not the least of which is its serene disregard for vernacular solutions. What seems more interesting, however, is to learn from Modernism what it knows best—the pleasures of fluid, ambiguous, free space....

The users of our buildings, after all, do not live vernacular lives. Timber-frame clients don't live like Elizabethan freeholders. People who are excited by

'pattern language' imagery want certain qualities of vernacular places, but without their limitations. They want vernacular architecture within which to live modernist lives. And this is true for us as well. We are all exiles, and what we seek, with varying degrees of awareness and sophistication, is not the reality of place, but its illusion. The room in which I sit—with a shaped ceiling and columns at the corners, with light from two sides and a fire and soft window seats—I live in *as if* it were the center of the world. I know it's not; intellectually I'm post-Copernican. But willingly and daily I'm eager to suspend disbelief: this is the center and I'm inside—the *illusion of place*, living as if at home in the world, when all the while we are *en route*....

Imagine a building that could express our longing for place and our desire to leave it behind, a building that, like a canny mother, could both hold us *and* let us go: equal parts place and journey, pattern language meets early modernism inside and around a timber frame. It would be an interesting raising!



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